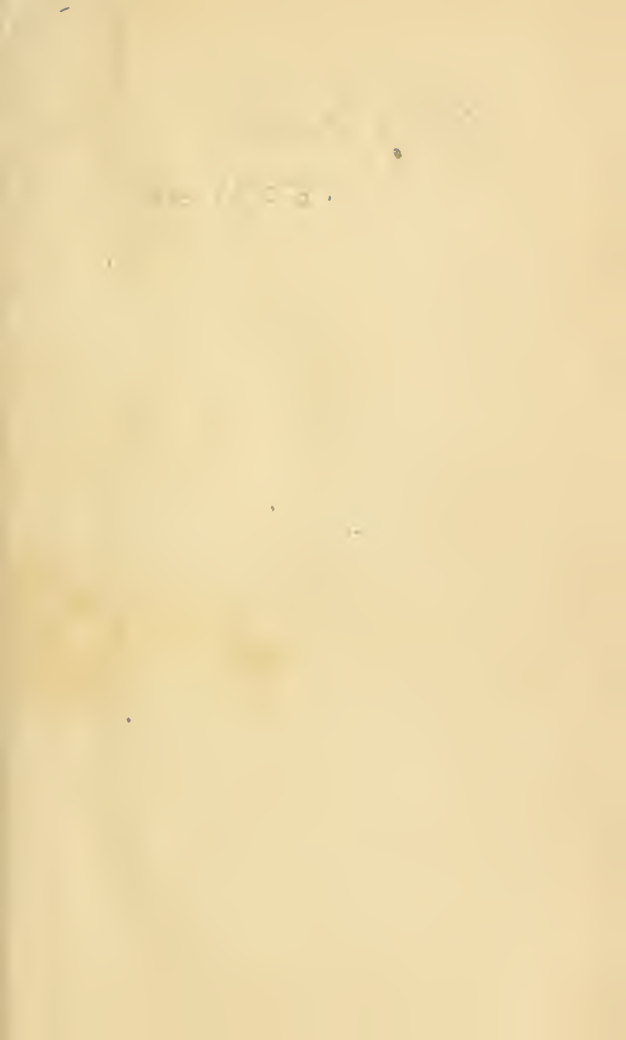


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The priest, the Puritan, and  
the preacher







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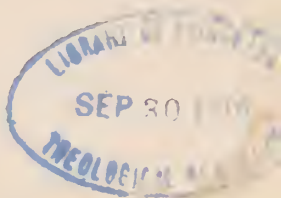
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THE PRIEST,  
THE PURITAN,  
AND  
THE PREACHER.

BY THE  
REV. J. C. RYLE,  
AUTHOR OF "LIVING OR DEAD," "WHEAT OR CHAFF," "STARTLING  
QUESTIONS," "RICH OR POOR," ETC.



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I.

Bishop Latimer.

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A LECTURE TO YOUNG MEN.



# I

## Bishop Latimer.

I HAVE no doubt the name of Bishop Latimer is known to almost all who are here to-night. There are, probably, few who have forgotten that three hundred years ago there was such a queen of England as bloody Mary, and that men were burned alive in her reign because they would not desert Christ's truth—and that one of these men was Bishop Latimer.

But I want young Englishmen to know these things better. I want them to become thoroughly familiar with the lives, the acts, and the opinions of the leading English reformers. Their *names* ought to be something better than hackneyed ornaments to point a platform speech, and rhetorical traps to elicit an Exeter Hall cheer. Their *principles* ought no longer

to be vague, hazy shadows, "looming in the distance," but something clear, distinct, and well-defined before your mind's eyes. My desire is, that you may understand that the best interests of this country are bound up with Protestantism. My wish is, that you may write on your hearts that the well-being of England depends not on commerce, or politics, or steam, or armies, or navies, or gold, or corn ; but on the maintenance of the principles of the English Reformation.

The times you live in call loudly for the diffusion of knowledge about English Church history. Opinions are boldly broached now-a-days of so startling a nature, that they make a man rub his eyes, and say, "Where am I?" A state of feeling is growing up among us about Romanism and Protestantism which, to say the least, is most unhealthy. It has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. Nothing is so likely to check this state of feeling as the production of a few plain facts. If you want to convince a Scotchman, they say, you must give him a long argument. If



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you want to convince an Englishman, you must give him plain facts. Facts are the principal commodity I have brought here to-night. If any one has come to hear private speculations, or oratorical display, I am afraid he will go away disappointed; but if any one likes plain facts, I think I shall be able to supply him with a few.

Are any of you in doubt who is a true member of the Church of England? Are you perplexed by the rise and progress of what are foolishly called "Church views?" Come with me to-night, and pay a visit to one of the Fathers of the English Church. Let us put into the witness-box one of the most honest and out-spoken bishops of the days of the English Reformation. Let us examine the life and opinions of good old Latimer.

Are any of you doubting what is the true character of the Church of Rome? Are you bewildered by some of those plausible gentlemen who tell you there is no fundamental difference between the Anglican and Romish Churches? Are you puzzled by that intense

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yearning after so-called Catholic principles which distinguishes some misguided churchmen, and which exhibits itself in Catholic teaching, Catholic ceremonies, Catholic books of devotion, and Catholic architecture? Come with me to-night, and turn over a few old pages in English history. Let us see what England actually was when Romish teachers instructed the English people, and had things all their own way. Let us see what the Church of Rome does when she has complete power. Let us see how she treats the friends of an open Bible, of private judgment, and of justification by faith. Let us see how the Church of Rome dealt with Bishop Latimer.

And now, without further preface, let me try to tell you something about—

I. Latimer's *times*.

II. Latimer's *life*, and

III. Latimer's *opinions*.

I. The times of Bishop Latimer deserve attentive consideration. It is impossible to form a just estimate of a man's conduct unless we know the circumstances in which he is placed,

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and the difficulties with which he has to contend. No one is thoroughly aware of the extent of our obligations to the noble band of English Reformers who is not acquainted with the actual state of England when they began their work, and the amazing disadvantages under which their work was carried on.

Latimer was born in the reign of Henry VII. He lived through the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI., and was put to death in the reign of Queen Mary. He began life at a period when Popery bore undisputed sway in this country. He witnessed the beginning of the breach between Henry VIII. and Rome, and the establishment of a transition state of religion in England. He lived to see the full development of Protestantism under Edward VI., and the compilation of a Liturgy and Articles very slightly differing from those we have at this day. Of each of these three periods I must say a few words.

The period of Latimer's life when Popery was supreme in England, was a period of utter spiritual darkness. The depth of superstition

in which our worthy forefathers were sunk is enough to make one's hair stand on end. No doubt there were many Lollards, and followers of Wycliffe, scattered over the land, who held the truth, and were the salt of the nation. But the fierce persecution with which these good men were generally assailed prevented their making much progress. They barely maintained their own ground. And as for the mass of the population, gross darkness covered their minds.

Most of the priests and teachers of religion were themselves profoundly ignorant of everything they ought to have known. They were generally ordained without any adequate examination as to learning or character. Many of them, though they could read their breviaries, knew nothing whatever of the Bible. Some, according to Strype, the historian, were scarcely able to say the Lord's prayer, and not a few were unable to repeat the ten commandments. The prayers of the Church were in the Latin language, which hardly any body understood. Preaching there was scarcely any,

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and what there was was grossly unscriptural and unedifying. Quarterly sermons were prescribed to the clergy, but not insisted on. Mass, according to Latimer, was not to be omitted for a single Sunday; but sermons might be omitted for twenty Sundays together, and nobody found fault.

Huge nests of ordained men were dotted over the face of England in the shape of abbeys and monasteries. The inhabitants of these beautiful buildings were seldom very holy and self-denying, and were often men of most profligate and disreputable lives. Their morals were just what might have been expected from fullness of bread and abundance of idleness. They did next to nothing for the advancement of learning. They did nothing for the spread of true religion. Two things only they cared for; and those two were to fill their own pockets, and to keep up their own power. For the one purpose they persuaded weak and dying people to give money and land to the Church, under the specious pretence that they would in this way be delivered from purgatory, and

their faith proved by their good works. For the other purpose they claimed to hold the keys of the kingdom of heaven. To *them* confession of sins must be made. Without *their* absolution and extreme unction no man could be saved. Without *their* masses no soul could be redeemed from purgatory. In short, *they* were, practically, the mediators between Christ and man, and to injure them was the highest offense and sin. Old Fuller tells us, for example, that in 1489, a certain Italian got an immense sum of money in England by "having power from the Pope to absolve people from usury, simony, theft, manslaughter, fornication, and adultery, and all crimes whatsoever, except smiting the clergy, and conspiring against the Pope." (i. 532, Tegg's edition.) Such were Romish priests in Latimer's youth, when Popery was last rampant in England. To say that they were generally ignorant, covetous, sensual, and despotic tyrants over the souls and bodies of men, is not saying one jot more than the truth.

When priests in Latimer's youth were men

of this stamp, you will not be surprised to hear that *the people* were utterly ignorant of true religion. It would have been miraculous, indeed, if it had been otherwise, when they had neither sound preaching to hear nor Bibles to read. A New Testament could not be bought for less than 2*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.*, and the buyer was in danger of being considered a heretic for purchasing it. The Christianity of the vast majority was, naturally enough, a mere name and form. The Sabbath was a day of sport and pastime, and not a day of solemn worship. Not one in a hundred, perhaps, could have rightly answered the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" or given the slightest account of justification, regeneration, sanctification, the office of Christ, or the work of the Spirit. A man's only idea of the way to heaven generally was, to do as the priest told him, and to belong to the true Church. Thus the blind led the blind, and all wallowed in the ditch together.

All the practical religion that the mass of the laity possessed, consisted in prayers to the Virgin and saints—pilgrimages to holy places—

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and adoration of images and relics. The list of their superstitious practices would make an appalling catalogue. They hastened to the church for holy water before a thunder-storm. They resorted to St. Rooke in times of pestilence. They prayed to St. Pernel in an ague. Young women, desiring to be married, sought the help of St. Nicholas. Wives, weary of their husbands, betook themselves to St. Uncumber. One hundred thousand pilgrims visited the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket, at Canterbury, in one year, in order to help their souls toward heaven. In one year, at Canterbury Cathedral, there was offered at Christ's altar, 3*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*; on the Virgin Mary's, 63*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.*; and on Thomas à Becket's, 832*l.* 12*s.* 3*d.* The *images* worshiped were often gross cheats as well as idols. At Bexley, in Kent, there was a famous crucifix on which the figure of our Lord would move its head, hands, and feet, roll its eyes, move its lips, and bend its brow. It would hang its lips when silver was offered to it, and shake its head merrily when the offering was gold. And all this was thought



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miraculous. At length it was discovered that the image was full of springs and wires, and that the movements were caused by priests or their agents secreted near it. The *relics* worshiped were as monstrous and absurd as the images. At Hales, in Gloucestershire, there was shown, in a crystal phial, what was called the blood of Christ, but it was at length discovered to be the blood of a duck. At Reading, there was shown an angel with one wing, who brought over the spear that pierced our Lord's side. At Bury, in Suffolk, the coals that roasted St. Lawrence, the parings of St. Edmond's toe-nails, and St. Thomas à Becket's penknife and boots, were all religiously adored. As to wood of the true Cross, enough was found in the churches, when relics were finally cast out, to have made two or three crosses. As to the bones of saints, there were whole heaps which had been venerated for years which proved, at length, to be bones of pigs. These are dreadful things to tell, but they ought to be known. All these things the Church of Rome knew, connived at, sanc-

tioned, defended, taught, and enforced on her members. This was the state of religion in England three hundred and fifty years ago, when the English reformers were raised up. This was English Christianity in the childhood and youth of Hugh Latimer.

The second period of Latimer's life, during which England was in a state of transition between Romanism and Protestantism, presents many curious features.

We see, on the one hand, a reformation of religion begun by a king from motives which, to say the least, were not spiritual. It would be absurd to suppose that a sensual tyrant like Henry VIII. came to a breach with the Pope for any other reason than that the Pope crossed his will. We see his pretended scruples about his marriage with Catharine of Arragon bringing him into communication with Cranmer and Latimer. We see him, *at one time*, so far guided by the advice of these good men, that, like Herod, he does many things that are right, and calculated to advance the cause of the Gospel. He makes Cranmer, Archbishop

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of Canterbury, and shows him favor to the very end of his days. He allows the Bible to be printed in English, and placed in churches. He commands images to be broken, and puts down many gross superstitions. He boldly denies the doctrine of the Pope's supremacy. He dissolves the monasteries, and puts to open shame the wickedness of their inmates. All this we see, and are thankful. We see him, *at another time*, defending popish dogmas, and burning men, who, like the martyr, Lambert, denied them. We see him putting forth the famous Six Articles, which re-asserted transubstantiation, private masses, clerical celibacy, vows of chastity, auricular confession, and the denial of the cup to the laity. Worst of all, we see in him the marks of a proud, self-willed, sensual man all his life long, and an utter want of evidence that his heart was ever right in the sight of God. The use of a man who was guilty of such inconsistencies, to do God's work, is among the deep things of God's providence. We can not understand it. We must wait.

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Turning, on the other hand, from Henry VIII. to the first English reformers, we see in them strong indications of what Fuller calls "a twilight religion." We see them putting forth books in Henry VIII.'s reign, which, though an immense improvement and advance upon Romish teaching, still contain some things which are not scriptural. Such were the "necessary erudition," and the "institution of a Christian man." We see them, however, gradually growing in spiritual knowledge, perhaps unawares to themselves, and specially as to the error of transubstantiation. We see them continually checked and kept back, partly by the arbitrary conduct of the king, partly by the immense difficulty of working side by side with a popish party in the church, and partly by the great ignorance of the parochial clergy. Nevertheless, on comparing the end of Henry VIII.'s reign with the beginning, we see plain proof that much ground was gained. We learn to admire the overruling power of God, who can use a Henry VIII. just as he did a Nebuchadnezzar or Sennache-

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rib, for the accomplishment of His own purposes. And last, but not least, we learn to admire the patient perseverance of the reformers. Though they had but a little strength they used it. Though they had but a small door open, they entered in by it. Though they had but one talent, they laid it out heartily for God, and did not bury it in the ground. Though they had but a little light, they lived fully up to it. If they could not do what they would, they did what they could, and were blessed in their deed. Such was the second period of Latimer's life. Never let it be forgotten that, at that time, the foundations of the Church of England were excavated, and vast heaps of rubbish removed out of the way of the builders who were to follow. Viewed in this light, it will always be an interesting period to the student of church history.

The last period of Latimer's life, which comprises the reign of Edward VI., is, in many respects, very different from the two periods to which I have already adverted. The cause of

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English Protestantism made immense progress during Edward's short but remarkable tenure of power. It was truly said of him by Hooker, that "he died young, but lived long, if life be action." Released from the bondage of a tyrannical king's interference, Cranmer and his friends went forward in the work of religious reformation with rapid strides. Bonner and Gardiner were no longer allowed to keep them back. Refusing to take part in the good work, these two popish prelates were deposed, and put to silence. Faithful men, like Ridley and Hooper, were placed on the episcopal bench. An immense clearance of popish ceremonies was effected. A Liturgy was compiled, which differed very slightly from our present Prayer-Book. The forty-two articles of religion were drawn up, which form the basis of our own thirty-nine. The first book of Homilies was put forth, in order to supply the want of preachers. An accuracy and clearness of doctrinal statement was arrived at, which had hitherto been unknown. Learned foreigners, like Bucer and Peter Martyr, were

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invited to visit England, and appointed Regius Professors of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge. How much further the Reformers might have carried the work of reformation, if they had had time, it is useless now to speculate. Judging by the changes they effected in a very few years, they would probably have made our church as nearly perfect as a visible Church can be, if they had not been stopped by Edward's premature death.

There was, however, one thing which the Reformers of Edward the Sixth's reign could not accomplish. They could not change the hearts of the parochial clergy. Thousands of clergymen continued to hold office in the church of England, who had no sympathy with the proceedings of Cranmer and his party. There was no getting rid of these worthies, for they were ready to promise any thing, sign any thing, swear any thing, in order to keep their livings. But while they yielded compliance to Cranmer's injunctions and commands, they were graceless, ignorant, and semi-papists at heart. The questions

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which Bishop Hooper found it necessary to put to the dean, prebendaries, and clergy of the diocese of Gloucester on his first visitation, furnish us with a sad illustration of the state of English clergymen in Edward the sixth's time. They are as follows: "How many commandments are there? Where are they written? Can you say them by heart? What are the articles of the Christian faith? Can you repeat them? Can you confirm them by Scripture? Can you recite the Lord's prayer? How do you know it to be the Lord's prayer? Where is it written?" These questions are sad enough, but what will you think of the result of the inquiry? Out of three hundred and eleven clergymen in the diocese of Gloucester, it turned out that one hundred and sixty-eight could not repeat the ten commandments, and out of these thirty-one could not state in what part of the Scriptures they were to be found. Forty of the three hundred and eleven could not tell where the Lord's prayer was written, and thirty-one did not know who was its Author. (Hooper's works, vol. ii., p.



151.) Facts such as these are painful and astounding; but it is most important that you should know them. They explain at once the ease with which bloody Mary restored popery when she came to the throne. Parochial clergymen, like those just described, were not likely to offer any resistance to her wishes. Facts such as these throw great light on the position of Cranmer, and the reformers of Edward the Sixth's days. We probably have little idea of the immense difficulties, both within and without, which beset them. Above all, facts such as these give you some idea of the condition of religion in England even in the brightest portion of Latimer's times. If things like these were to be seen when Latimer was an old man, what must have been seen when he was young? If ignorance like this prevailed under Edward VI., how thick must the darkness have been under Henry VIII.!

I must dwell no longer on the subject of Latimer's times. I fear that I shall have wearied you already with a dry and tedious detail of facts. But I firmly believe that a knowl-

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edge of these facts is absolutely essential to a right understanding of the English Reformation, and I, therefore, hope they will not prove useless.

On calm consideration, I trust you will agree with me, that it is the height of absurdity to say, as some do now-a-days, that this country has been a loser by getting rid of popery. It is really astonishing to hear the nonsense talked "about merry England in the olden times," the "mediæval piety," the "ages of faith," and the "devout habits of our Catholic forefathers."

Walter Scott's beautiful writings, and Pugin's beautiful architectural designs, have lent a false glare to Romanism in England, and induced many to doubt whether our Reformation really was a gain. I do trust that young London will not be so young as to listen to such delusive theories. Doubt not for a moment, that the state of English society, which Scott has sometimes made so beautiful by his pen, and Pugin by his pencil, is a far more beautiful thing in poems and pictures than it ever was in honest reality. Depend upon it,

that "distance lends enchantment to the view." Rest satisfied, that Netley, and Glastonbury, and Tintern, and Bury, and Fountains, and Melrose, and Bolton Abbeys, are probably more useful now in ruins than ever they were in Henry the Seventh's days. Never forget what we have gained by the Reformation;— we have gained light, knowledge, morality, and religious liberty. Never forget the fruits which grew on the tree of Popery when last it flourished in England. These fruits were ignorance, superstition, immorality, and priestly tyranny. God was angered. Souls were lost, and the devil was pleased.

Again, I trust you will feel with me to-night that it is most unfair to suppose that the acts and writings of the English Reformers under Henry VIII. are any real criterion of their matured opinions. It is as unfair as it would be to measure the character of a grown up man by his sayings and doings when he was a child. Remember that the Reformers under Henry VIII. were in a state of spiritual childhood. They saw many points in religion

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through a glass darkly. It was not till the reign of Edward VI. that they put away childish things. Beware, therefore, lest any man ever deceive you by artfully chosen quotations drawn from works published in the beginning of the English Reformation. Judge the Reformers, if you will, by their writings in the reign of Edward VI., but not by their writings in the reign of Henry VIII.

Lastly, I trust that you will agree with me to-night, that it is most unreasonable to decry the early English Reformers as men who did not go far enough. Such charges are easily made, but those who make them seldom consider the enormous obstacles the Reformers had to surmount, and the enormous evils they had to remove. It is nonsense to suppose they had nothing more to do than to pare the moss off an old building, and whitewash it afresh. They had to take down an old decayed house, and rebuild it from the very ground. It is nonsense to talk as if they had a smooth sea, a fair wind, and a clear course. On the contrary, they had to pilot the ship of

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true religion through a narrow and difficult strait, against current, wind, and tide. Put all their difficulties together—the arbitrary, profligate character of Henry VIII., and the tender years of Edward VI.—the general ignorance of the population—the bitter enmity of dispossessed monks and friars—the open opposition of many of the bishops, and the secret indifference of a vast proportion of the clergy—put all these things together, and weigh them well, and then I think you will not lightly regard the work that the early Reformers did. For my own part, so far from wondering that they did so little, I wonder rather that they did so much. I marvel at their firmness. I am surprised at their success. I see immense results produced by comparatively weak instruments, and I can only account for it by saying, that “God was with them of a truth.”

II. The second part of this evening's lecture, to which I shall next invite your attention, is the story of Bishop Latimer's life.

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Hugh Latimer was born about the year 1485, at Thurcaston, near Mount Sorrel, in the county of Leicester. He has left such a graphic account of his father and family in one of his sermons, preached before Edward VI., that I must in justice give it to you in his own words. He says, "my father was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own. He had only a farm of three or four pounds a year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had walk for one hundred sheep, and my mother milked thirty kine. He was able, and did bring the king a harness with himself and his horse, when he came to the place where he should receive the king's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness when he went to Blackheath field. He kept me to school, or else I had not been able to have preached before the king's majesty now. He married my sisters with five pounds apiece, and brought them up in godliness and the fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbors, and some alms he gave to the poor." (Works, i. 101.

Parker's Soc. edition.) Such is the good bishop's homely account of his own family. It is only fair to observe, that Latimer is one among the thousand examples on record that England, with all its faults, is a country where a man may begin very low, and yet live to rise very high.

Latimer was sent to Cambridge at the age of fourteen, and in 1509 was elected a fellow of Clare Hall. We know very little of his early history, except the remarkable fact which he himself has told us, that up to the age of thirty he was a most violent and bigoted papist. Just as St. Paul was not ashamed to tell men that at one time he was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, so the old Protestant bishop used often to tell how he, too, had once been the slave of Rome. He says, in one of his sermons, "I was as obstinate a papist as any was in England, inso-much that when I should be made a bachelor of divinity, my whole oration went against Philip Melancthon and his opinions." (Works, i. 334.) He says, in another sermon, "All the

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papists think themselves to be saved by the law, and I myself was of that dangerous, perilous, and damnable opinion till I was thirty years of age. So long had I walked in darkness and the shadow of death." (i. 137.) He says, in a letter to Sir Edward Baynton, "I have thought, in times past, that if I had been a friar, and in a cowl, I could not have been damned, nor afraid of death; and by reason of the same, I have been minded many times to have been a friar, namely, when I was sore sick, or diseased. Now I abhor my superstitious foolishness." (i. 332.)

Latimer's testimony about himself is confirmed by others. It is recorded that he used to think so ill of the Reformers, that he declared the last times, the Day of Judgment, and the end of the world must be approaching. "Impiety," he said, "was gaining ground apace, and what lengths might not men be expected to run, when they began to question even the infallibility of the Pope." Becon mentions, that when Stafford, the divinity lecturer, delivered lectures on the Bible,



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Latimer was sure to be present, in order to frighten and drive away the scholars. In fact, his zeal for popery was so notorious, that he was elected to the office of cross-bearer in the religious processions of the University, and discharged the duty with becoming solemnity for seven years. Such was the clay of which God formed a precious vessel meet for his work. Such were the first beginnings of one of the best and most useful of the English Reformers.

The instrument which God used in order to bring this furious papist to a knowledge of Christ's truth, was a student named Bilney. Bilney was a cotemporary of Latimer's at Cambridge, who had for some time embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. He perceived that Latimer was a sincere and honest man, and kindly thought it possible that his zeal for popery might arise from a lack of knowledge. He therefore went boldly to him after his public onslaught on Melancthon, and humbly asked to be allowed to make a private confession of his own faith. The success of this

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courageous step was complete. Old Latimer tells us, "I learned more by his confession than before in many years. From that time forward I began to smell the word of God, and forsook the school-doctors, and such fooleries." (i. 335.) Bilney's conduct on this occasion seems to have been most praiseworthy. It ought to encourage every one to try to do good to his neighbor. It is a shining proof of the truth of the proverb, "A word spoken in season, how good is it."

Hugh Latimer was not a man to do any thing by halves. As soon as he ceased to be a zealous Papist, he began at once to be a zealous Protestant, and gave himself up, body, soul, and mind, to the work of doing good. He visited, in Bilney's company, the sick and prisoners. He commenced preaching in the university pulpits, in a style hitherto unknown in Cambridge, and soon became famous as one of the most striking and powerful preachers of the day. He stirred up hundreds of his hearers to search the Scriptures, and inquire after the way of salvation. Becon, afterward chap-

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lain to Cranmer, and Bradford, afterward chaplain to Ridley, both traced their conversion to his sermons. Becon has left us a remarkable description of the effects of his preaching. He says, "None, except the stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, went away from it without being affected with high detestation of sin, and moved unto all godliness and virtue." (ii. 224. Parker's Society Edition.)

The consequences of this faithful discharge of ministerial duty were just what all experience might lead us to expect. There arose against Latimer a storm of persecution. Swarms of friars and doctors who had admired him when he carried the cross as a papist, rose up against him in a body, when he preached the cross like St. Paul. The Bishop of Ely forbade his preaching any more in the university pulpits; and had he not obtained permission from Dr. Barnes to preach in the church of the Augustine Friars, which was exempt from Episcopal jurisdiction, he might have been silenced altogether. But the malice of his enemies did not stop here. Complaints

were laid against him before Cardinal Wolsey, and he had more than once to appear before him, and Tostall, Bishop of London, on charges of heresy. Indeed, when the circumstances of the times are considered, it is wonderful that Latimer did not at this period of his life share Bilney's fate, and suffer death at the stake.

But the Lord, in whose hands our times are, had more work for Latimer to do, and raised up for him unexpected friends in higher quarters. His decided opinions in favor of Henry the Eighth's divorce from Catherine of Arragon, brought him into communication with Dr. Butts, the king's physician, and ultimately secured him the favor and patronage of the king himself. In the year 1530, he was made one of the royal chaplains, and preached before the king several times. In the year 1531, the royal favor procured for him an appointment to the living of West Kingston, near Chippenham, in Wiltshire: and, in spite of his friend Dr. Butts' remonstrances, he at once left court, and went to reside upon his cure.

At West Kington, Latimer was just the same man that he had been latterly at Cambridge, and found the devil just as busy an adversary in Wiltshire, as he had found him in the University. In pastoral labors he was abundant. In preaching he was instant in season and out of season, both within his parish and without. This he had full authority to do, by virtue of a general license from the University of Cambridge. But the more he did, the more angry the idle popish clergy round West Kington became, and the more they labored to stop his proceedings. So true is it that human nature is the same in all ages. There is generally a dog-in-the-manger spirit about a graceless minister. He neither does good himself, nor likes any one else to do it for him. This was the case with the Pharisees: they "took away the key of knowledge: they entered not in themselves, and them that were entering in they hindered." And as it was in the days of the Pharisees, so it was in the days of Latimer.

On one occasion, the mayor and magistrates

of Bristol, who were very friendly to him, had appointed him to preach before them on Easter-day. Public notice had been given, and every body was looking forward to the sermon with pleasure, for Latimer was very popular in Bristol. Suddenly there came out an order from the bishop, forbidding any one to preach in Bristol without his license. The clergy of the place waited on Latimer, and informed him of the bishop's order, and then, knowing well that he had no such license, told him "that they were extremely sorry they were deprived of the pleasure of hearing an excellent discourse from him." Their compliments and crocodile regrets were unfortunately, ill-timed. Latimer had heard the whole history of the affair. And he knew well that these smooth-tongued gentlemen were the very persons who had written to the bishop in order to prevent his preaching.

For four years, while vicar of West Kington, the good man was subjected to a constant succession of petty worrying attacks and attempts to stop him from doing good. He was

cited to London, and brought before Archbishop Warham, and detained many months from home. He was convened before convocation, and excommunicated and imprisoned for a time. But the protecting care of God seems to have been always round him. His enemies appear to have been marvelously restrained from carrying their malice to extremities. At length, in 1535, the king put a sudden stop to their persecution by making him Bishop of Worcester. That such a man should make such an appointment, is certainly very wonderful. Some have attributed it to the influence of Lord Cromwell; some to that of Queen Anne Boleyn; some to that of Dr. Butts; some to that of Cranmer, who was always Latimer's fast friend. Such speculations are, to say the best, useless. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord: as the rivers of the south, he turneth it withersoever he will." When God intends to give a good man a high office, he can always raise up a Darius to convey it to him.

The history of Latimer's episcopate is short

and simple, for it only lasted four years. He was the same man in a bishop's palace, that he had been in a country parsonage, or a Cambridge pulpit. Promotion did not spoil him. The miter did not prove an extinguisher to his zeal for the Gospel. He was always faithful—always simple-minded—always about his Father's business—always laboring to do good to souls. Foxe, the historian, speaks highly of "his pains, study, readiness, and continual carefulness in teaching, preaching, exhorting, visiting, correcting, and reforming, either as his ability could serve, or the times would bear." But he adds, "the days then were so dangerous and variable that he could not in all things do what he would. Yet what he might do, that he performed to the uttermost of his strength, so that, although he could not utterly extinguish all the sparkling relics of old superstition, yet he so wrought that though they could not be taken away, yet they should be used with as little hurt, and as much profit as might be."

In 1536, we find Bishop Latimer appointed



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by Archbishop Cranmer to preach before the convocation of the clergy. No doubt this appointment was made advisedly. Cranmer knew well that Latimer was just the man for the occasion. The sermons he preached are still extant, and fully justify the archbishop's choice. Two more faithful and conscience-stirring discourses were probably never delivered to a body of ordained men. They will repay an attentive perusal. "Good brethren and fathers," he says in one place, "seeing we are here assembled for the love of God, let us do something whereby we may be known to be the children of light. Let us do somewhat, lest we, which hitherto have been judged children of the world, prove even still to be so. All men call us prelates; then, seeing we be in council, let us so order ourselves that we be prelates in honor and dignity, that we may be prelates in holiness, benevolence, diligence, and sincerity."

"Lift up your heads, brethren, and look about with your eyes, and spy what things are to be reformed in the Church of England. Is

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it so hard, so great a matter, for you to see many abuses in the clergy, and many in the laity?" He then mentions several glaring abuses by name—the state of the Court of Arches and the Bishop's Consistories—the number of superstitious ceremonies and holidays—the worship of images, and visiting of relics and saints—the lying miracles and the sale of masses—and calls upon them to consider and amend them. He winds up all by a solemn warning of the consequences of bishops neglecting notorious abuses; "God will come," he says, "God will come; he will not tarry long away. He will come upon such a day as we nothing look for him, and at such an hour as we know not. He will come and cut us in pieces. He will reward us as he doth the hypocrites. He will set us where wailing shall be, my brethren—where gnashing of teeth shall be, my brethren. These be the delicate dishes prepared for the world's well-beloved children. These be the wafers and junkets provided for worldly prelates, wailing and gnashing of teeth. Ye see, brethren,

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what sorrow and punishment is provided for you if ye be worldlings. If you will not then be vexed, be not the children of the world. If ye will not be the children of the world, be not stricken with the love of worldly things; lean not upon them. If ye will not die eternally, live not worldly. Come, go to; leave the love of your profit; study for the glory and profit of Christ; seek in your consultations, such things as pertain to Christ, and bring forth at last somewhat that may please Christ. Feed ye tenderly with all diligence the flock of Christ. Preach truly the Word of God. Love the light, walk in the light, and so be ye the children of light while ye are in this world, that ye may shine in the world to come bright as the stars, with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." (Works, vol. i. p. 50.) Such was a sermon before convocation by Latimer.

In 1537, we find Bishop Latimer placed on the Commission of Divines, for the publication of a book to set forth the truth of religion, the result of which commission was "the institu-

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tion of a Christian man." The same year we find him putting forth some injunctions to the prior of Worcester convent, a monastic house not yet dissolved, in which, among other things, he commands the prior to have a whole Bible, in English, chained in the church. He orders every member of the convent to get himself an English New Testament; he directs a lecture of Scripture to be read in the convent every day, and Scripture to be read at dinner and supper. Shortly afterward, he published injunctions to the clergy of his diocese, in which he commands every one of them to provide himself with a whole Bible, or at any rate, with a New Testament, and every day to read over and study one chapter, at the least. He also forbids them to set aside preaching for any manner of observance, ceremonies, or processions, and enjoins them to instruct the children in their respective parishes. All these little facts are deeply instructive. They show us what an Augæan stable an English diocese was in Henry the

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Eighth's day, and what enormous difficulties a reforming bishop had to overcome.

In 1538, we find Latimer pleading with Lord Cromwell, that Great Malvern Abbey might not be entirely suppressed. He suggests that it should be kept up, "not for monkery," which he says, "God forbid," but "to maintain teaching, preaching, study, and prayer;" and he asks whether it would not be good policy to have two or three of the old monastic houses in every county set apart for such purposes. This was a very wise design, and shows great foresight of the country's wants. Had it been carried into effect, Durham, St. Bees, Lampeter, and King's College would have been unnecessary. The rapacity of Henry the Eighth's courtiers, who had an amazing appetite for the property of the suppressed abbeys, made the suggestion useless.

In 1539, Bishop Latimer's episcopate was brought to an end by the enactment of the six Articles already referred to, in which some of the leading tenets of Romanism were authori-

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tatively maintained. He strenuously withstood the passing of this Act, in opposition to the king and the parliament, and the result was that he was compelled to resign his bishopric. It is related, that on the day when this happened, when he came back from the House of Lords to his lodgings, he threw off his robes, and leaping up, declared to those who stood about him, that he found himself lighter than he had been for some time.

The next eight years of Latimer's life appear to have passed away in forced silence, and in retirement. We read little of any thing that he did. We do not exactly know where he spent his time, and whether he returned to his old living at West Kington or not. The probability is, that he was regarded as a dangerous and suspected man, and had much difficulty in preserving his life. The only certain fact we know is, that he was at length committed to prison as a heretic, and spent the last year of Henry the Eighth's reign in confinement in the Tower.

When Edward VI. came to the throne in

1547, Latimer was at once released from prison, and treated with every mark of respect. His old bishopric of Worcester was offered to him, and the House of Commons presented an address to the Protector Somerset, earnestly requesting that he might be re-appointed. Old age, and increasing infirmities made Latimer decline the proffered dignity, and he spent the next six years of his life without any office, but certainly not as an idle man. His chief residence, during these six years, was with his old friend and ally, Archbishop Cranmer, under the hospitable roof of Lambeth Palace. While here, he took an active part in all the measures adopted for carrying forward the Protestant Reformation. He assisted Cranmer in composing the first book of Homilies, and was also one of the divines appointed to reform the Ecclesiastical Law, a work which was never completed. All this time he generally preached twice every Sunday. In the former part of Edward the Sixth's reign he preached constantly before the king. In the latter part, he went to and

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fro in the midland counties of England, preaching wherever his services seemed to be most wanted, and especially in Lincolnshire. This was perhaps the most useful period of his life. No one of the reformers, probably, sowed the seeds of sound Protestant doctrine so widely and effectually among the middle classes, as Latimer. The late Mr. Southey bears testimony to this: he says, "Latimer, more than any other man, promoted the Reformation by his preaching."

The untimely death of Edward VI., and the accession of Queen Mary to the throne in 1553, put an end to Latimer's active exertions on behalf of the Gospel. Henceforward he was called to glorify Christ by suffering, and not by doing. One of the first acts of Mary's government was the apprehension of the leading English reformers, and Latimer was among the first for whom a warrant was issued. The queen's messenger found him doing his Master's work, as a preacher in Warwickshire, but quite prepared for prison. He had received notice of what was coming six hours before



the messenger arrived, from a good man named Careless, and might easily have escaped. But he refused to avail himself of the opportunity. He said, "I go as willingly to London at this present, being called by my prince to render a reckoning of my doctrine, as ever I went to any place in the world. And I do not doubt but that God, as he hath made me worthy to preach his word to two excellent princes, so he will enable me to witness the same unto the third." In this spirit he rode cheerfully up to London, and said, as he passed through Smithfield, where heretics were generally burned, "Smithfield has long groaned for me."

Latimer was at once committed to the Tower, in company with Cranmer, Ridley, and Bradford, and for want of room, all the four were confined in one chamber. There these four martyrs, to use old Latimer's words, "did together read over the New Testament with great deliberation, and painful study," and unanimously agreed that transubstantiation was not to be found in it. From the Tower,

the three bishops were removed to Oxford, in 1554, and there, in 1555, Latimer and Ridley were burned alive at the stake, as obstinate heretics.

Latimer's conduct in prison was answerable to his previous life. For two long years he never lost his spirits, and his faith and patience never failed him. Much of his time was spent in reading the Bible. He says himself, "I read the New Testament over seven times while I was in prison." Much of his time was spent in prayer: Augustine Bernher, his faithful servant, tells us that he often continued kneeling so long that he was not able to get up from his knees without help. Three things he used especially to mention in his prayers at this time. One was, that as God had appointed him to be a preacher and professor of his word, so he would give him grace to stand to His doctrine till his death. Another was, that God would of His mercy restore the Gospel of Christ to the realm once again: he often repeated these two words, "once again." The third was, that God would

preserve the Princess Elizabeth, and make her a comfort to England. It is a striking fact that all these three prayers were fully granted.

Latimer's conduct at his various trials and examinations before his Popish persecutors was in some respects wiser and better than that of the other martyrs. He knew well enough that his death was determined on, and he was quite right. Gardiner, the Popish Bishop of Winchester, had said openly, that "he would have the ax laid at the root of the tree: the bishops and most powerful preachers ought certainly to die." Bonner, the Popish Bishop of London had said, "God do so to Bonner, and more also, if one of the heretics escape me." Acting on this impression, Latimer told Ridley before the trial, that he should say little. "They talk of free disputation," said he, "but their argument will be as it was with their forefathers, 'We have a law, and by our law he ought to die.'" Acting on this impression, he did little at his various trials but make a simple profession of his faith. He refused to be led away into lengthy

discussions about the opinions of the Fathers, like Cranmer and Ridley. He told his judges plainly, that "the Fathers might be deceived in some points," and that he only "believed them when they said true, and had Scripture with them!" A wiser and truer remark about the Fathers was probably never made.

The death of old Latimer is so beautifully described by Foxe, that I can not do better than give you the account as nearly as possible in his words. I certainly shall not try to spoil it by any additions of my own, though want of time will oblige me to abridge it considerably.

"The place appointed for the execution (says Foxe) was on the north side of Oxford, in the ditch over against Balliol College. For fear of any tumult that might arise to prevent their burning, Lord Williams and the householder of the city, were commanded by the Queen's letter to be assistant, sufficiently armed, and when all things were in readiness, the prisoners were brought forth together, on the 16th of October, 1555.

“Ridley came first, in a furred black gown, such as he was wont to wear as a bishop. After him came Latimer, in a poor Bristol frieze frock, all worn, with his buttoned cap and a handkerchief over his head, and a long new shroud hanging over his hose, down to his feet.

“Ridley, looking back, saw Latimer coming after, to whom he said, ‘Oh! are ye there?’ ‘Yea,’ said Master Latimer, ‘as fast as I can follow.’ At length they came to the stake, one after the other. Ridley first entered the place, and earnestly holding up both his hands looked toward heaven. Shortly after, seeing Latimer, he ran to him, embraced and kissed him, saying, ‘Be of good cheer, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flames, or else strengthen us to abide it.’

“With that he went to the stake, kneeled down by it, kissed it, and prayed; and behind him Latimer kneeled, earnestly calling upon God. After they arose, one talked with another a little while, but what they said, Foxe could not learn of any man.

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“Then were they compelled to listen to a sermon preached by a renegade priest, named Smith, upon the text, ‘Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am nothing.’ They attempted to answer the false statements of this miserable discourse, but were not allowed. Ridley said, ‘Well! then I commit our cause to Almighty God, who shall impartially judge all.’ Latimer added his own verse, ‘Well! there is nothing hid, but it shall be made manifest,’ and said, ‘He could answer Smith well enough, if he might be suffered.’

“They were commanded after this to make ready immediately, and obeyed with all meekness. Ridley gave his clothes, and such things as he had about him to those that stood by, and happy was he that could get any rag of him. Latimer gave nothing, but quietly suffered his keeper to pull off his hose and his other apparel, which was very simple. And now, being stripped to his shroud, he seemed as comely a person to them that stood by as one could desire to see. And though in his

clothes he appeared a withered, crooked old man, he now stood quite upright.

“Then the smith took a chain of iron, and fastened it about both Ridley’s and Latimer’s middles to one stake. As he was knocking in a staple, Ridley took the chain in his hands, and said to the smith, ‘Good fellow, knock it in hard, for flesh will have its course.’ A bag of gunpowder was tied about the neck of each. Faggots were piled round them, and the horrible preparations were completed.

“Then they brought a faggot kindled with fire, and laid it down at Ridley’s feet. To whom Latimer then spake in this manner, ‘Be of good comfort, brother Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out.’

“And so the fire being kindled, when Ridley saw the fire flaming up toward him, he cried with a loud voice, ‘Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit; Lord, receive my spirit;’ and repeated the latter part often. Latimer, crying as vehemently on the other side

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of the stake, 'Father of heaven, receive my soul,' received the flame as if embracing it. After he had stroked his face with his hands, and, as it were, bathed them a little in the fire, he soon died, as it appeared, with very little pain." And thus much, says Foxe, concerning the end of this old blessed servant of God, Bishop Latimer, for whose "laborious services, fruitful life, and constant death, the whole realm has cause to give great thanks to Almighty God."

And now it is high time for me to turn from the subject of Latimer's life. I have given you a brief sketch of his history from his birth to his death. You will easily believe that for want of time I have left many things untold.

I might dwell on the good man's *preaching*. Few, probably, have ever addressed an English congregation with more effect than he did. No doubt his sermons now extant, would not suit modern taste. They contain many quaint, odd, and coarse things. They are very familiar, rambling, and discursive, and often full of gossiping stories. But, after all, we are poor



judges in these days, of what a sermon ought to be. A modern sermon is too often a dull, tame, pointless, religious essay, full of measured round sentences, Johnsonian English, bald platitudes, timid statements, and elaborately concocted milk and water. It is a leaden sword, without either point or edge, a heavy weapon, and little likely to do much execution. But if a combination of sound Gospel doctrine, plain Saxon language, boldness, liveliness, directness, and simplicity, can make a preacher, few, I suspect, have ever equaled old Latimer.

I might tell you of the many proofs he gave of *courage and faithfulness as a minister*. He did not shrink from attacking any body's sins, even if they were the sins of a king. When Henry VIII. checked the diffusion of the Bible, Latimer wrote him a plain-spoken letter, long before he was a bishop, remonstrating with him on his conduct. He feared God, and nothing else did he fear. "Latimer, Latimer," he exclaimed, at the beginning of one of his sermons, "Thou art going to speak be-

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fore the high and mighty King Henry VIII., who is able, if he think fit, to take thy life away. Be careful what thou sayest. But, Latimer, Latimer, remember also thou art about to speak before the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Take heed that thou dost not displease him."

I might speak of his *unworldliness*. He gave up a rich bishopric, and retired into private life, for conscience-sake, without a murmur. He refused that same bishopric again, because he felt too old to fulfill its duties, when he might have had it by saying "Yes." I might speak of his *genuine kindness* of heart. He was always the friend of the poor and distressed. Much of his time, while he stayed at Lambeth, was occupied in examining into the cases of people who applied to him for help. I might speak of his *diligence*. To the very end of his life he used to rise at two o'clock in the morning, and begin reading and study. All this, and much more, I might tell you, but time would fail if I entered into more particulars.

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I trust, however, I have given you facts enough to supply you with some faint idea of what the man was. I trust you are ready to agree with me, that he was one of the best bishops this country has ever had, and that it would have been well for the Church of England, if more of her bishops had been like Bishop Latimer, and fewer like Archbishop Laud.

Do not forget, as you think over the history of his life, that he is a glorious instance of the miracles which the grace of God can work. The Spirit can take a fierce papist, you see, and make him a faithful Protestant. Where the hand of the Lord is, nothing is impossible. Never think that any friend, relation, or companion is too much opposed to the Gospel to become a true Christian. Away with the idea! There are no hopeless cases under the Gospel. Remember Latimer, and never despair.

Do not forget, as you think over Latimer's last days, that he is a glorious proof that Jesus can sustain his people even in the fire, and

will be a present help to those who trust Him in their time of need. 'Think not for a moment that any thing is too hard to be borne, if God be with you. Do not give up religion because you see fiery trials in your way, because your place is unfavorable, and circumstances are against you. Remember old Latimer at the stake, and never be cast down.

III. The third and last thing which I proposed to do to-night, was to give you a brief account of some of Latimer's opinions.

I ask your especial attention to this portion of the evening's Lecture. The circumstances of the times you live in, invest the subject with more than ordinary importance.

You live in days when very strange statements are made in some quarters as to the true doctrines of the Church of England. You live in days, when semi-popish views about the rule of faith—about justification—about regeneration—about the sacraments—about preaching—are urged upon the attention of Young England, and when the advocates and

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teachers of these views are coolly arrogating to themselves the credit of being the only sound churchmen.

It is to no purpose that those who repudiate these semi-popish views, challenge their advocates to prove them by Scripture. The ready answer is at once given, that, whether these views are scriptural or not, there can be no doubt they are "*church views.*" It is to no purpose that we deny these views are to be found in the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies of the Church of England, when honestly and consistently interpreted. We are quietly told that we know nothing about the matter. We are stupid. We are dense. We are blind. We are ignorant. We do not understand plain English. They are the true men. Their views are the true "*church views,*" and if we disagree with them, we must be quite wrong. In short, we are left to infer that, if we are honest and consistent, we ought to leave our dear old church, and give it up to them. I appeal to the experience of many here present. You know well I am describing

things which are going on in every part of the land.

Now, as matters have come to this pass, let us see whether we can not throw a little light on the subject by looking back three hundred years. Let us inquire what were the views of the men who laid the foundations of the Church of England, and are notoriously the fathers of the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy. Let us put old Latimer into the witness-box to-night, and see what his opinions were upon the points in dispute. An honored member of the Church of England at the period when the doctrines of the Church were first brought into shape and form—a near and dear friend and adviser of Archbishop Cranmer—an assistant in the composition of the first book of Homilies—a bishop whose orthodoxy and soundness were never called in question for a moment by his cotemporaries—if any man knows what a true churchman ought to hold, Bishop Latimer must surely be that man;—if his views are not true “church” views, I know not whose are.

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Bear with me, then, for a few minutes, while I give you some extracts from Latimer's works. Bear with me while I try to confirm your minds on the important question of the present day, Who is, and who is not, a true Churchman?

First of all, What did Bishop Latimer think about SCRIPTURE? This is a point with which the very existence of true religion is bound up. Some churchmen tell us now-a-days, notwithstanding the Sixth Article, that the Bible alone is not the rule of faith, and is not able to make a man wise unto salvation. No! it must be the Bible and the fathers, or the Bible and Catholic tradition, or the Bible and the Church—or the Bible explained by the Prayer-book, or the Bible explained by an episcopally-ordained man, but not the Bible alone. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says, in a sermon before Edward VI., "I will tell you what a bishop of this realm once said to me. He sent for me, and marvelled that I would not consent to such traditions as were set out. And I answered him, that I would be ruled by God's Book, and

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rather than depart one jot from it, I would be torn by wild horses. I chanced in our communication, to name the Lord's Supper. Tush! saith the bishop, What do you call the Lord's Supper? What new term is this? There stood by him one Dr. Dubber. He dubbed him by-and-by, and said that this term was seldom read in the doctors. And I made answer, That I would rather follow Paul in using his terms than them, though they had all the doctors on their side." (Works, i. 121.)

He says again, in his Conference with Ridley:—"A layman, fearing God, is much more fit to understand holy Scripture, than any arrogant or proud priest, yea, than the bishop himself, be he ever so great and glistening in his pontificals. But what is to be said of the Fathers? How are they to be esteemed? St. Augustine answereth, giving his rule, that we should not therefore think it true because they say so, do they never so much exceed in holiness and learning; but if they be able to prove their saying by canonical Scripture, or by good probable reasons;—meaning that to be a



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probable reason, I think, which doth orderly follow upon a right collection and gathering out of the holy Scriptures.

“Let the papists go with their long faith. Be you contented with the short faith of the saints, which is revealed to us in the Word of God written. Adieu to all popish fantasies. Amen! For one man, having the Scripture, and good reason for him, is more to be esteemed himself alone, than a thousand such as they, either gathered together, or succeeding one another. The Fathers have both herbs and weeds, and papists commonly gather the weeds and leave the herbs.” (Ridley’s Works, p. 114. Parker’s Edition.)

I make no comment on these passages, they speak for themselves.

In the next place, what did Bishop Latimer think about *justification by faith*? This is the doctrine which Luther truly called the criterion of a standing or falling church. This is the doctrine which, in spite of the Eleventh Article of our Church, many are now trying to obscure, by mingling up with it baptism,

the Lord's Supper, our own works, and I know not what besides. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says, in a sermon preached at Grims-  
thorpe, "Christ reputeth all those for just,  
holy, and acceptable before God, which believe  
in him, which put their trust, hope, and confi-  
dence in him. By his passion which he suffered,  
he merited, that as many as believe in him shall  
be as well justified by him, as though they  
had never done any sin, and as though they  
had fulfilled the law to the uttermost. For we  
without him are under the curse of the law.  
The law condemneth us. The law is not able  
to help us. And yet the imperfection is not  
in the law, but in us. The law itself is holy  
and good, but we are not able to keep it, and  
so the law condemneth us. But Christ, with  
his death hath delivered us from the curse of  
the law. He hath set us at liberty, and prom-  
ised that when we believe in him we shall not  
perish, the law shall not condemn us. There-  
fore, let us study to believe in Christ. Let us  
put all our hope, trust, and confidence only in

him. Let us patch him with nothing, for, as I told you before, our merits are not able to deserve everlasting life. It is too precious a thing to be merited by man. It is his doing only. God hath given him to us to be our deliverer, and to give us everlasting life." (ii. 125.)

He says again, in another sermon, "Learn to abhor this most detestable and dangerous poison of the papists, which go about to thrust Christ out of his office. Learn, I say, to leave all papistry, and to stick only to the Word of God, which teacheth that Christ is not only a judge, but a justifier, a giver of salvation, and a taker away of sin. He purchased our salvation through his painful death, and we receive the same through believing in him, as St. Paul teacheth us, saying, freely ye are justified through faith. In these words of St. Paul, all merits and estimation of works are excluded and clean taken away. For if it were for our works' sake, then it were not freely, but St. Paul saith *freely*. Whether will you now believe, St. Paul, or the papists?" (ii. 147.)

He says again, in another sermon, "Christ only, and no man else, merited remission, justification, and eternal felicity, for as many as will believe the same. They that will not believe it, shall not have it; for it is no more, but believe and have." (i. 421.)

Once more, I say these passages require no comment of mine. They speak for themselves.

In the next place, what did Bishop Latimer think about *regeneration*? This, as you are all aware, is the subject of one of the great controversies of the day. Multitudes of churchmen, in spite of the Seventeenth Article, and the Homily for Whit-Sunday, maintain that all baptized persons are necessarily regenerate, and receive grace, and the Holy Ghost, at the moment they are baptized. In a word, they tell us that every man, woman, and child, who has received baptism, has also received regeneration, and that every congregation in the Church of England should be addressed as an assembly of regenerated persons. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says, in a sermon preached in Lincoln-

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shire, "There be two manner of men. Some there be that be not justified, not regenerate, not yet in the state of salvation, that is to say, not God's servants. They lack the renovation, or regeneration. They be not yet come to Christ." (ii. 7.) He says, in a sermon preached before Edward VI., "Christ saith, Except a man be born from above, he can not see the kingdom of God. He must have a regeneration. And what is this regeneration? *It is not to be christened in water*, as those firebrands expound it, and nothing else. How is it to be expounded, then? St. Peter showeth that one place of Scripture declareth another. It is the circumstance and collection of places that maketh Scripture plain. We be born again, says Peter, and how? Not by a mortal seed, but an immortal. What is the immortal seed? By the word of the living God;—by the word of God preached and opened. Thus cometh in our new birth." (i. 202.) He says, in another Lincolnshire sermon, "Preaching is God's instrument, wherby he worketh faith in our hearts. Our

Saviour saith to Nicodemus, Except a man be born anew, he can not see the kingdom of God. But how cometh this regeneration? By hearing and believing the word of God, for so saith St. Peter." (i. 471.)

Once more, I say, these passages require no comment of mine. They speak for themselves.

In the next place, what did Bishop Latimer think about the *Lord's Supper*? This, I need hardly say, is a subject about which very un-protestant doctrine is often taught in the present day. Some around us, in the face of the Twenty-eighth Article, speak of this sacrament in such a manner, that it is hard to see the difference between their doctrine and popish transubstantiation, or the sacrifice of the mass. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says in his disputation at Oxford, "In the sacrament there is none other presence of Christ required than a spiritual presence. And this presence is sufficient for a Christian man, as the presence by which we abide in Christ, and Christ in us, to the obtaining of eternal life, if we persevere in the true Gospel. And

this same presence may be called a real presence, because, to the faithful believer, there is the real and spiritual body of Christ." (ii. 252.) He says, in the same disputation, "Christ spake never a word of sacrificing, or saying of mass; nor promised the hearers any reward but among the idolaters, with the devil and his angels, except they repent speedily. Therefore, sacrificing priests should now cease forever; for now all men ought to offer their own bodies a quick sacrifice, holy and acceptable before God. The supper of the Lord was instituted to provoke us to thanksgiving, and to stir us up by preaching of the Gospel, to remember his death till he cometh again." (ii. 256.) He says, in his last examination, "There is a change in the bread and wine, and such a change as no power but the omnipotency of God can make, in, that that which before was bread should now have the dignity to exhibit Christ's body. And yet the bread is still bread, and the wine still wine. For the change is not in the nature, but the dignity." (ii. 286.) He says, in one of his Lincoln-

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shire sermons, "Whosoever eateth the mystical bread, and drinketh the mystical wine worthily, according to the ordinance of Christ, he receiveth surely the very body and blood of Christ spiritually, as it shall be most comfortable to his soul. He eateth with the mouth of his soul, and digesteth with the stomach of his soul, the body of Christ. And, to be short, whosoever believeth in Christ, putteth his hope, trust, and confidence in him, he eateth and drinketh him. For the spiritual eating is the right eating to eternal life, not the corporeal eating." (i. 459.)

Once more I say, I make no comment on these passages. They speak for themselves.

It would be easy to multiply quotations of this kind to an endless length, if time permitted. There is hardly a controverted subject in the present day on which I could not give you some plain, scriptural, sensible, sound opinion of Bishop Latimer.

Would you like to know what he thought about *preaching*? Did he think little of it, as some do in this day, and regard it as a means



of grace very subordinate to sacraments and services? No! indeed he did not. He calls it "the office of salvation, and the office of regeneration." He says, "Take away preaching, and take away salvation." He says, "This office of preaching is the only ordinary way that God hath appointed to save us all. Let us maintain this, for I know none other." He declares that "preaching is the thing the devil wrestled most against. It hath been all his study to decay this office. He worketh against it as much as he can. He hath made unpreaching prelates, and stirred them up by heaps to persecute this office in the title of heresy." (i. 155, 203, 306, 349, 202.)

Would you like to hear what he thought about a *gorgeous ceremonial and candles in churches*? He says plainly, that these things come from the devil. "Where the devil is resident, and hath his plow going, there away with book, and up with candles; away with Bible, and up with beads; away with the light of the Gospel, and up with the light of candles, yea, even at noon-day. Where

the devil is resident that he may prevail, up with all superstition and idolatry, censing, painting of images, candles, palms, ashes, holy water, and new services of man's inventing." (i. 71.)

Would you like to know what he thought about *unity*? Did he think, as some do now, that it is the one thing needful, and that we should give up every thing in order to obtain it? No! indeed. He says, "Unity must be according to God's holy Word, or else it were better war than peace. We ought never to regard unity so much that we forsake God's Word for her sake." (i. 487.)

Would you like to know what he thought about the *foreign reformers*? Did he lightly esteem them, as some do now-a-days, because they did not retain episcopacy? No! indeed he did not. He says, "I heard say, Melancthon, that great clerk, should come hither. I would wish him, and such as he is, to have two hundred pounds a year. The king would never want it. There is yet among us two great learned men, Peter Martyr and Bernard

Ochin, which have a hundred marks a-piece. I would the king would bestow a thousand pounds on that sort." (i. 141.)

Would you like to know what he thought about *councils and convocations*? Did he regard them as the grand panacea for all ecclesiastical evils, like those around us, whose cry is, "Give us synodical action, or we die?" He says to Ridley, "touching councils and convocations, I refer you to your own experience to think of our own country's parliaments and convocations. The more part in my time did bring forth the Six Articles. Afterward the more part did repeal the same. The same Articles are now again restored. Oh! what uncertainty is this." And he says, in another place, "More credence is to be given to one man having the holy Word of God for him, than to ten thousand without the Word. If it agree with God's Word it is to be received. If it agree not, it is not to be received, though a council had determined it." (Ridley, 130; Latim. i. 288.)

Would you like to know what he thought

*of thorough-going Protestant preaching?* Did he think, as some do now, that if a sermon contains a good deal of truth, a little false doctrine may be excused and allowed? No! indeed he did not. He says, "Many preach God's way, and shall preach a very good and godly sermon, but at last they will have a blanched almond, one little piece of popery patched in to powder their matter with, for their own lucre and glory. They make a mingling of the way of God and man's way, a mangle-mangle, as men serve pigs in my country." (i. 290.)

I will not detain you any longer with these extracts. I have already trespassed too much on your attention. I will only ask you to remember well whose words I have been quoting, and when they were spoken.

These words were not spoken last year. They did not fall from the lips of the rectors of St. George's, Bloomsbury; or St. Mary, Whitechapel; or St. George's, Southwark. They were not spoken by the ministers of Park Chapel, Chelsea; or of Portman Chapel;

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or the Lock; or St. John's, Bedford-row, or by some platform-orator, at Exeter Hall. No! gentlemen, the words I have quoted are three hundred years old. They are the words of one of the best bishops the Church of England ever had. They are the words of the man who helped to compose our first book of Homilies. They are the words of the friend and adviser of Archbishop Cranmer. They are the words of one whom king and parliament delighted to honor.

Why was the speaker of these words not cast out of the church? Why was he not reprimanded? Why was he not reviled as a man of low, unchurchmanlike opinions? Why was he not proceeded against, and persecuted for his views? How is it that he was persecuted only by papists, but always honored by Protestants—persecuted by Bonner, Gardiner, and Bloody Mary; but honored by Cranmer, Ridley, and Edward VI.?

I will give you a plain answer to these questions. I answer them by saying that, three hundred years ago, no man in his senses doubt-

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ed that Latimer's opinions were the real opinions of the Church of England. I go on further to affirm, that the truest and best members of the Church of England at the present day, are those whose views are most in harmony with those of good Bishop Latimer. And I say that, to tell men who love the Church of England with deep affection, that they are not sound churchmen, merely because they agree with Latimer and not with Laud, is to bring against them a most unfair and unwarrantable charge.

And now let me conclude this Lecture with three practical remarks.

For one thing, let me advise the members of the Church of England Young Men's Society, *to take care that their Society never departs from its declared principles.* Sound principles are the roots of a Society's success. Without these, your means and appliances for doing good will prove comparatively useless. Your libraries, and reading-rooms, and lectures, will fail to confer on you lasting benefits. Without sound principles, they may look well in

your annual reports ; but, like a tree rotten at the root, they will bring no fruit to perfection.

Take up your stand boldly on the principle of the English reformers. Never shrink from avowing yourselves to be a thoroughly Protestant and evangelical body. Do not be shy of those two words. Such avowal may lose you the support of a few pretended friends, who will drop off like leaves in autumn when they see your decision. It will, however, strengthen you in the long run, and make you an evergreen tree. Pardon the freedom of this hint. I give it because you live in evil days, and because I am anxious you should hoist the right colors, and be an unmistakable Society.

In the next place, let me earnestly exhort you, as individuals, *never to be ashamed of holding what are called evangelical views within the Church of England.* Listen not to those supercilious gentlemen, on the one side, who would have you believe that if you are not high churchmen, like themselves, you are no churchmen at all. Listen not to those exceedingly

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kind friends, on the other side, who try to persuade you that the Established Church is a regular popish concern, and ought to be left at once. Both these are ancient tricks. Against both these tricks be on your guard.

Do not be bullied out of the Church of England by the high churchman's assertion that you are only a tolerated party, and have no business by his side. No doubt you live in a communion where great freedom of opinion is allowed. But to tell men of evangelical views that they are merely *tolerated*, is a downright insult to the memory of the reformers. Let us make answer to people who tell us so, that, if they have forgotten Latimer and three hundred years ago, we have not. Let us say that we are not going to desert the church of Latimer, in order to please men who wish to lord it over God's heritage, and have things all their own way. Sure I am that, if might should ever prevail over right, and the friends of Latimer should be thrust out of the church by force, and the House of Commons should be mad enough to sanction it—sure am I, that



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the men thrust out would be better churchmen than the men left behind.

And do not be wheedled out of the Church by the arguments of men outside, who would probably be glad to be in it, if they only saw the way. When the fox, in an old fable, could not reach the grapes, he said they were sour. When the fox, in another fable, lost his tail in a trap, he tried to persuade his friends that foxes did much better without tails, and advised them to get rid of their own. Do not forget the moral of that fable; do not be enticed into biting off your own tails. Rest assured, that with all its faults and defects, the Church of England has very high privileges to offer to its members. Think well about these privileges. Do not be always poring over the defects. Resolve that you will not lightly cast these privileges away.

Above all, never, never forget that evangelical views are not only theoretically sound and agreeable to the minds of the reformers, but they are also of vital importance to the very existence of the Church of England.

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Never has our beloved Church stood so low in this country, as when evangelical views have been at zero, and almost forgotten. Never has she stood so high as when the views of Latimer and the Reformers have been honestly preached, and carried out. So far from being ashamed of evangelical opinions, you may be satisfied that the maintenance of them is rapidly becoming a matter of life or death to your own communion. Take away Latimer's views, and I firmly believe the whole Establishment would collapse before the pressure from without, and come to the ground.

Last of all, let me entreat you all, as Englishmen, to *beware of countenancing any retrograde movement in this country toward the Church of Rome, and to resist such movement by every means in your power, from whatever quarter it may come.*

I am sure that this warning is one which the times loudly call for. The Church of Rome has risen up among us with renewed strength in the last few years. She does not disguise her hope that England, the lost planet, will

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soon resume her orbit in the so-called Catholic system, and once more revolve in blind obedience round the center of the Vatican. She has succeeded in blinding the eyes of ignorant persons to her real character. She has succeeded in securing the unexpected aid of misguided men within our own Establishment. A hundred little symptoms around us tell us how real the danger is. Laud and the non-jurors are cried up, Latimer and the reformers are cried down. Historical works are industriously circulated, in which Bloody Mary is praised, and Protestant Elizabeth blamed. A morbid tenderness toward Romanists, and a virulent bitterness toward Dissenters, have sprung up side by side. An unhealthy attention is paid to what is called mediæval taste. Thousands of tracts are sown broad-cast over the land in which the three leading phrases to be seen are generally those three ominous words, "*priest*," "*catholic*," and "*church*." The use of the rosary, prayers for the dead, and the Hail Mary, is deliberately recommended to the members of the English Church. Little

by little, I fear, the edge of English feeling about popery is becoming blunt and dull. Surely I have good reason to tell you to beware of the Church of Rome.

Remember the darkness in which Rome kept England when she last had the supreme power. Remember the gross ignorance and degrading superstitions which prevailed in Bishop Latimer's youth. Think not for a moment that these are ancient things, and that Rome is changed. The holy-coat of Tréves, the winking picture at Rimini, the mental thralldom in which unhappy Italy is kept, the notorious practices which go on in the Holy City to this day, are all witnesses that Rome, when she has power, is not changed at all. Remember this, and beware.

Remember the horrible persecutions which Rome carried on against true religion when she last had uncontrolled sway in this country. Remember the atrocities which disgraced the days of Bloody Mary, and the burning of Bishop Latimer. Think not for a moment that Rome is altered. The persccution of

Bible readers in Madeira, and the imprisonment of the Madaia, are unmistakable proofs that, after three hundred years, the old persecuting spirit of Rome still remains as strong as ever. Remember this also, and beware.

Shall we, in the face of such facts as these, return to the bondage in which our forefathers were kept? Shall we give up our Bibles, or be content to sue for sacerdotal license to read them? Shall we submit ourselves humbly to Italian priests? Shall we go back to the adoration of pigs' bones, ducks' blood, and saints' toe nails? God forbid—I say for one—God forbid! Let the dog return to his vomit. Let the sow that was washed, return to her wallowing in the mire. Let the idiotic prisoner go back to his chains. But God forbid that Israel should return to Egypt! God forbid that England should go back into the arms of Rome! God forbid that old Latimer's candle should ever be put out!

Work, every one, if you would prevent such a miserable consummation. Work hard for the extension of pure, scriptural, and evangel-

ical religion at home and abroad. Labor to spread it among the Jews, among the Roman Catholics, among the heathen. Labor not least to preserve and maintain it, by every constitutional means, in your own church.

Cherish, every one, if you would prevent the increase of Romanism—cherish and cultivate a brotherly feeling toward all orthodox Protestants, by whatever name they may be called. Away with the old rubbishy opinion, that the Church of England occupies a middle position, a *via media* between dissent and Rome. Cast it away, for it is false. You might as well talk of the Isle of Wight being midway between England and France. Between us and Rome there is a gulf, and a broad and deep gulf too. Between us and orthodox Protestant dissent, there is but a thin partition wall. Between us and Rome the differences are about essential doctrines, and things absolutely necessary to salvation. Between us and dissent the division is about things indifferent, things in which a man may err, and yet be saved. Rome is a downright

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open enemy, attacking the very foundation of our religion. Dissent is an ally, and friendly power, not wearing our uniform, nor yet, as we think, so well equipped as we are, but still an ally, and fighting on the same side. Oh! do not let this hint be thrown away. Cherish, I do beseech you, a kind, brotherly feeling toward all who love the same Saviour, believe the same doctrines, and honor the same Bible as yourselves.

Pray, every one, if you would prevent the increase of Romanism—pray night and day, that God may preserve this country from popery, and not deal with it according to its sins. It is a striking fact that almost the last prayer of good King Edward VI., on his death-bed, was a prayer to this effect; “O, my Lord God, defend this realm from papistry, and maintain thy true religion.” There was a prayer in the Litany of our Prayer-book, in 1549, which, I think, never ought to have been cast out of it. “From all sedition, and privy conspiracy—FROM THE TYRANNY OF THE BISHOP OF ROME, AND ALL HIS DETESTABLE ENORMITIES—from

all false doctrine, and heresy—from hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandments, Good Lord, deliver us!” To that prayer may you ever be able to say heartily, Amen, and amen!

LONDON, February 28, 1853.



II.

Baxter and his Times

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A LECTURE TO YOUNG MEN.



## II.

### Baxter and his Times.

I MUST ask you to-night to look back to times long gone by—to look back some two hundred years. I feel this is rather a bold request to make. Progress is the order of the day in which you live. “Go a head” has become a familiar expression wherever English is spoken. “Forward” is the motto of the times. Few are willing to look back.

But there are subjects about which it is well to look behind us. There are matters in which a knowledge of the past may teach us wisdom for the present and the future. The history of religion is pre-eminently such a subject and matter. Steam, electricity, railways, and gas, have made a wonderful difference in the temporal condition of mankind in the last two

hundred years. But all this time the Bible and the hearts of men have remained unaltered. That which men did and thought in religious matters two hundred years ago, they are capable of doing and thinking again. What they thought and did in England, in the seventeenth century, it is well to know.

And just as there are subjects about which it is wise to look behind us, so also there are times long gone by which deserve our special attention. There are times when the character of a nation receives an indelible impression from events which take place in a single generation. There have been times when the dearest privileges of a people have been brought to the birth, and called into vigorous existence, through the desperate agony of civil war and religious strife. Such, I take leave to say, were the times of which I am about to speak to-night. To no times are Englishmen so deeply indebted for their civil and religious liberty as the times in which Baxter lived. To nobody of men do they owe such an unpaid debt of gratitude as they do to that noble host, of

which Baxter was a standard-bearer—I mean the Puritans. To no man among the Puritans are the lovers of religious freedom under such large obligations as they are to Richard Baxter. This is the man, and these are the times, which form the subject of this evening's lecture.

I am fully sensible of the difficulties which surround the subject. It is a subject which few historians handle fairly, simply because they do not understand spiritual religion. To an unconverted man the religious differences of the day of the Puritans must necessarily appear foolishness. He is no more qualified to give an opinion about them than a blind man is to talk of pictures. It is a subject which no clergyman of the Church of England can approach without laying himself open to misrepresentation. He will be suspected of disaffection to his own Church, if he speaks favorably of men who opposed Bishops. But it is a subject on which it is most important for Christian young men to have distinct opinions, and I must ask for a patient hearing. If I can correct some false impressions, if I can supply

you with a few great principles to guide you in these perilous times, I feel I shall have done your souls an essential service. And if I fail to interest you in "Baxter and his 'Times,'" I am sure the fault is not in the subject, but in me.

I. The times in which Baxter lived comprehend such a vast amount of interesting matter, that I must of necessity leave many points in their history entirely untouched.

You will see my meaning when I tell you that he was born in 1615, and died in 1691. Nearly all his life was passed under the dynasty of a house which reigned over England with no benefit to the country and no credit to itself—I mean the Stuarts. He lived through the reign of James I.; Charles I., Charles II., and James II., and was buried in the reign of William III. He was in the prime of health and intellectual vigor all through the days of the Commonwealth and the Civil Wars. He witnessed the overthrow of the Monarchy and the Church of England, and their subsequent re-establishment. He was a cotemporary of Crom-

well, of Laud, of Strafford, of Hampden, of Pym, of Monk, of Clarendon, of Milton, of Hale, of Jeffreys, of Blake. In his days took place the public execution of an English monarch, Charles I.—of an Archbishop of Canterbury, Laud—and of a Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland Strafford. Within the single period of his life are to be found the plague, the fire of London, the Westminster Assembly, the Long Parliament, the Savoy Conference, and the rejection of two thousand of the best ministers of the Church of England by the Act of Uniformity. Such were the eventful times in which Baxter lived. I can not, of course, pretend to enter fully into them. Their history forms a huge picture, like the moving panorama of the Mississippi, which it is utterly impossible to take in at a glance. I shall simply try to fix your attention on a few of the leading features of the picture, and I shall choose those points which appear to me most likely to be useful in the present day.

One remarkable feature in the history of Baxter's times is the move backward from the

principles of the Protestant Reformation, which commenced in his youth. Doctrines and practices began to be maintained, both by preachers and writers in the Church of England, which Latimer and Jewell would never have sanctioned. Sound evangelical teaching was decried and run down, under the specious name of Calvinism. Good bishops, like Davenant, were snubbed and reprimanded. Bad bishops, like Montague and Wren, were patted on the back and encouraged. Preaching and lecturing were depreciated, and forms and ceremonies were exalted. The benefits of episcopacy were extravagantly magnified. Candlesticks and crosses, and all manner of Popish ornaments, were introduced into some of the churches. The sanctity of the Lord's day was invaded by the abominable "Book of Sports," and common people were encouraged to spend Sunday in England as it is now spent in France. The communion-tables, which up to this time had stood in the middle of the chancel, were removed to the east end of the churches, put behind rails, and profanely called



altars. Against all these sapping and mining operations, some, no doubt, protested loudly; but still the sappers and miners went on.

The prime agent in the whole movement was Archbishop Laud. Whether that unhappy man really intended to re-unite the Church of England with the Church of Rome is a question which will probably never be settled till the last day. One thing is very certain, that no one could have played the game of Rome more thoroughly than he did.

Like many a mischief-maker before and since, Laud pulled the house upon his own head. He raised a storm at length before which the Church, the Throne, and the Bishops, all went down together, and in the midst of which he himself was put on his trial and lost his life. But the Church of England received an injury in Laud's days from which it has never entirely recovered. Since his time there never has been wanting a succession of men among its ministers who have held most of Laud's principles, and occasionally have boldly

walked in his steps. So true are the words of Shakespeare,

“The evil that men do lives after them.”

The harm that Queen Mary did to the Church of England was nothing compared to the harm done by Laud.

Young men, never underrate the mischief that one bold, bad man can do, and especially in matters of religion. The seeds of error are like thistle-down. One head scattered by the wind will sow a whole field. One Tom Paine can rear up Infidels all over the world. One Laud can leaven generations with untold mischief. Never suppose that Tractarianism is a legitimate child of the Church of England. It is not so. It was scarcely heard of till the time of the Stuarts. Never suppose that Tractarianism is a new invention of these latter days. It is not so. It is two hundred years old. The father of Tractarians is Archbishop Laud. Remember these things, and you will have learned something from Baxter's times.

Another remarkable feature in the history

of Baxter's times is the famous civil war between Charles I. and his Parliament.

All war is an evil—a necessary evil sometimes—but still an evil; and of all wars, the most distressing is a civil war. It is a kind of huge family quarrel. It is a struggle in which victory brings no glory, because the strife has been a strife of brethren. Edge Hill, and Newbury, and Marston Moor, and Naseby, and Worcester, are names which call up none but painful reflections. The victors in each battle had spilled the blood of their own countrymen, and lessened the general strength of the nation.

But there is a point of view in which the civil war between Charles I. and his Parliament was peculiarly distressing. I allude to the striking fact, that the general irreligion and immorality of the King's party did more to ruin his cause than all the armies which the Parliament raised. There were hundreds and thousands of steady, quiet men, who, at the beginning of the war, were desirous to be still, and help neither side. But when they found that a man could not read his Bible to his de-

pendents and have prayer in his family without being persecuted as a Roundhead, they felt obliged, in self-defense, to join the Parliamentary forces. In plain words, the wickedness and profligacy of many of the Cavaliers drove godly men into the ranks of their enemies. That there was plenty of hypocrisy, fanaticism, and enthusiasm on the Parliamentary side I make no question. That there were some good men among the Cavaliers, such as Lord Falkland, I do not deny. But after every allowance, I have no doubt there was far more true religion among those who fought for the Parliament than among those who fought for the King.

The result of the civil war, under these peculiar circumstances, never need surprise any one who knows human nature. The drinking, swearing, roistering troopers, who were led by Prince Rupert, and Wilmot, and Goring, proved no match for the praying, psalm-singing, Bible-reading men whom Cromwell, and Fairfax, and Ireton, and Harrison, and Fleetwood, and Desborough, brought into the field.

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The steadiest men will in the long run make the best soldiers. A side which has a strong religious principle among its supporters will seldom be a losing one. "Those who honor God, God will honor; and they that despise Him shall be lightly esteemed."

I shall dismiss the subject of the civil war with one general remark, and one caution.

My general remark is, that, deeply as we must regret the civil war, we must in fairness remember that we probably owe to it the free and excellent Constitution which we possess in this country. God can bring good out of evil. The oscillations of England between despotism and anarchy, and anarchy and despotism, for many years after the breach between Charles I. and the House of Commons, were certainly tremendously violent. Still we must confess, that great political lessons were probably imprinted on the English mind at that period, of which we are reaping the benefit at this very day. Monarchs were taught that, like planets in heaven, they must be content to move in a certain orbit, and that an enlightened people

would not be governed and taxed without the consent of an unfettered House of Commons. Nations were taught that it is a far easier thing to pull to pieces than to build, and to upset an ancient monarchy than to find a government which shall be a satisfactory substitute. Many of the foundations of our choicest national privileges, I make no doubt, were laid in the Commonwealth times. You will do well to remember this. You may rest satisfied that this country owes an immense debt of gratitude to Brooke, and Hampden, and Whitelock, and Pym.

The caution I wish to give you respects the execution of Charles I. You will do well to remember that the great bulk of the Puritans were entirely guiltless of any participation in the trial and death of the king. It is a vulgar error to suppose, as many do, that the whole Parliamentary party are accountable for that wicked and impolitic act. The immense majority of the Presbyterians protested loudly against it. Baxter tells us expressly in his autobiography, that, together with many other

ministers, he declared his abhorrence of it, and used every exertion to prevent it. The deed was the doing of Cromwell and his immediate adherents in the army, and it is at their door that the whole guilt must lie. That the great body of the Puritans espoused the Parliamentary side there is no doubt. But as to any abstract dislike to royalty, or assent to King Charles' death, the Puritans are entirely innocent. Remember this, young men, and you will have learned something from the history of Baxter's times.

The next feature in the history of Baxter's times, to which I shall venture to call your attention, is the rise and conduct of that remarkable man, Oliver Cromwell.

There are few men on whose character more obloquy has been heaped than Oliver Cromwell. He has been painted by some as a monster of wickedness and hypocrisy. Nothing has been too bad to say of him. Such an estimate of him is simply ridiculous. It defeats the end of those who form it. They forget that it is no compliment to England to suppose

that it would so long tolerate the rule of such a monster. The man who could raise himself from being the son of a brewer at Huntingdon to be the most successful general of his age, and absolute dictator of this country for many years, must, on the very face of facts, have been a most extraordinary man.

For my own part I tell you frankly, that I think you ought to consider the estimate of Cromwell, which Carlyle and D'Aubigné have formed, to be a near approach to the truth. I own I can not go the lengths of the latter writer. I dare not pronounce positively that Cromwell was a sincere Christian. I leave the question in suspense. I hazard no opinion about it one way or the other, because I do not find sufficient materials for forming an opinion. If I were to look at his private letters, only, I should not hesitate to call him a converted man. But when I look at some of his public acts, I see much that appears to me very inexplicable. And when I observe how doubtfully Baxter and other good men, who were his cotemporaries, speak of him, my hes-



itancy as to his spirituality is much increased. In short, I turn from the question in a state of doubt.

That Oliver Cromwell was one of the greatest Englishmen that ever lived, I feel no doubt at all. No man, probably, ever won supreme power by the sword, and then used that power with such moderation as he did. England was probably more feared and respected throughout Europe, during the short time that he was Protector, than she ever was before, or ever has been since. His very name carried terror with it. He declared that he would make the name of an Englishman as great as ever that of a Roman had been. And he certainly succeeded. He made it publicly known that he would not allow the Protestant faith to be insulted in any part of the world. And he kept his word. When the Duke of Savoy began to persecute the Vaudois in his days, Cromwell interfered at once on their behalf, and never rested until the duke's army was recalled from the villages, and the poor people's goods and houses restored. When certain Protestants at Nismes, in

France, were threatened with oppressive usage by the French government, Cromwell instructed his ambassador at Paris to insist peremptorily, that proceedings against them should be dropped, and in the event of a refusal, to leave Paris immediately. In fact, it was said that Cardinal Mazarin, the French Minister, would change countenance when Cromwell's name was mentioned; and that it was almost proverbial in France, that the Cardinal was more afraid of Cromwell than of the devil. As for the Pope, he was so dreadfully frightened by a fleet which Cromwell sent into the Mediterranean, under Blake, to settle some matters with the Duke of Tuscany, that he commanded processions to be made in Rome, and the host to be exposed for forty hours, in order to avert the judgments of God, and save the Church. In short the influence of English Protestantism was never so powerfully felt throughout Europe as it was in the days of Oliver Cromwell.

I will only ask you to remember, in addition to these facts, that Cromwell's government was remarkable for its toleration, and this, too, in

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an age when toleration was very little understood; that his private life was irreproachable; and that he enforced a standard of morality throughout the kingdom which was, unhappily unknown in the days of the Stuarts. Remember all these things, and then I think you will not lightly give way to the common opinion that Cromwell was a wicked and hypocritical man. Rest assured that his character deserves far better treatment than it has generally received hitherto. Regard him as one who, with all his faults, did great things for your country. Let not those faults blind your eyes to the real greatness of his character. Give him a high place in the list of great men before your mind's eye. Do this, and you will have learned something from Baxter's times.

There is one more feature in the history of Baxter's times which I feel it impossible to pass over. I allude to the suicidal blindness of the Church of England under the Stuarts.

I touch on this subject with some reluctance. You will believe, I hope, that I love the Church, of which I am a minister, heartily and sincere-

ly; but I have never found out that my Church lays claim to infallibility, and I am bound to confess that in the times of the Stuarts she committed some tremendous mistakes. Far be it from me to say that these mistakes were chargeable upon all her members. Abbot, and Carlton, and Davenant, and Hall, and Prideaux, and Usher, and Reynolds, and Wilkins, were bright exceptions among the bishops, both as to doctrine and practice. But, unhappily, these good men were always in a minority in the Church; and the manner in which the majority administered the affairs of the Church is the subject to which I wish to call your attention. You ought to know something about the subject, because it serves to throw immense light on the history of our unhappy religious divisions in this country. You ought to know something of it to-night especially, because it is one which is intimately bound up with Baxter's life.

One part of the suicidal blindness of the Church, to which I have referred, was its long-continued attempt to compel conformity, and

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prohibit private religious exercises, by pains and penalties. A regular crusade was kept up against every body who infringed its canons, or did any thing contrary to its rubrics. Hundreds and thousands of men, for many years, were summoned before magistrates, fined, imprisoned, and often ruined; not because they had offended against the Gospel or the Ten Commandments, not because they had made any open attack on the churches, but merely because they had transgressed some wretched ecclesiastical by-law, more honored in the breach than in the observance; or because they tried by quiet, private meetings, to obtain some spiritual edification over and above that which the public services of the Church provided. At one time we read of good men having their ears cut off and their noses slit, for writing unfavorably of bishops. This was the fate of the father of Archbishop Leighton. At another time we read of an enactment by which any one present at a meeting of five or more persons, where there was any exercise of religion in other manner than that allowed by the lit-

urgy of the Church of England, was to be fined, or imprisoned for three months for the first offense, six months for the second offense, and for the third, transported for seven years. Many were afraid to have family prayer if more than four acquaintances were present. Some families had scruples about saying grace if five strangers were at table. Such was the state of England in the seventeenth century under the Stuarts.

The result of this miserable policy was just exactly what might have been expected. There arose a spirit of deep discontent on the part of the persecuted. There sprung up among them a feeling of disaffection to the Church in which they had been baptized, and a rooted conviction that a system must necessarily be bad in principle which could bear such fruits. Men became sick of the very name of the liturgy, when it was bound up in their memories with a fine or a jail. Men became weary of episcopacy, when they found that bishops were more frequently a terror to good works than to evil ones. The words of

Baxter, in a striking passage on this subject in his autobiography, are very remarkable:--  
“The more the bishops thought to cure schism by punishment, the more they increased the opinion that they were persecuting enemies of godliness, and the captains of the profane.”

And who that knows human nature can wonder at such a state of feeling? The mass of men will generally judge an institution by its administration, more than by its abstract excellences. When plain Englishmen saw that a man might do any thing so long as he did not break an ecclesiastical canon;—when they saw that people might gamble, and swear, and get drunk, and no one made them afraid, but that people who met after service to sing psalms and join in prayer were heavily punished;—when they saw that godless, ignorant, reprobate, profligate spendthrifts, sat under their own vines and fig-trees in peace, so long as they conformed and went to their parish churches; but that humble, holy, conscientious, Bible-reading persons, who sometimes went out of their parishes to church, were severely

fined;—when they found that Charles the Second and his boon companions were free to waste a nation's substance in riotous living, while the saints of the nation, like Baxter and Jenkyn, were rotting in jails;—I say, when plain Englishmen saw these things, they found it hard to love the Church which did them. Yet all this might often have been seen in many counties of England under the Stuarts. If this was not suicidal blindness on the part of the Church of England, I know not what is. It was helping the devil by driving good men out of her communion. It was literally bleeding herself to death.

The crowning piece of folly which the majority in the Church of England committed under the Stuarts, was procuring the Act of Uniformity to be enacted in the year 1662. This, you must remember, took place at the beginning of Charles the Second's reign, and shortly after the re-establishment of the monarchy and the Church.

This famous act imposed terms and conditions of holding office on all ministers of the



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Church of England which had never been imposed before, from the time of the Reformation. It was notoriously so framed as to be offensive to the consciences of the Puritans, and to drive them out of the Church. For this purpose it was entirely successful. Within a year no less than two thousand clergymen resigned their livings rather than accept its terms. Many of these two thousand were the best, the ablest, and the holiest ministers of the day. Many a man, who had been regularly ordained by bishops, and spent twenty or thirty years in the service of the Church without molestation, was suddenly commanded to accept new conditions of holding preferment, and turned out to starve, because he refused. Sixty of the leading parishes in London were at once deprived of their ministers, and their congregations left like sheep without a shepherd. Taking all things into consideration, a more impolitic and disgraceful deed never disfigured the annals of a Protestant church.

It was a disgraceful deed, because it was a

flat contradiction to the king's own promise at Breda, before he came back from exile. He was brought back on the distinct understanding that the Church of England should be re-established on such a broad and liberal basis as to satisfy the conscientious scruples of the Puritans. Had it not been for the assistance of the Puritans he would never have got back at all. And yet, as soon as the reins of power were fairly in the king's hands, his promise was deliberately broken.

It was a disgraceful deed, because the great majority of the ejected ministers might easily have been retained in the Church by a few small concessions. They had no abstract objection to episcopacy, or to a liturgy. A few alterations in the prayers, and a moderate liberty in the conduct of divine worship, according to Baxter's calculation, would have satisfied sixteen hundred out of the two thousand. But the ruling party were determined not to make a single concession. They had no wish to keep the Puritans in. When some one observed to Archbishop Sheldon, the chief mover

in the business, that he thought many of the Puritans would conform, and accept the Act of Uniformity, the Archbishop replied, "I am afraid they will." To show the spirit of the ruling party in the Church, they actually added to the number of apocryphal lessons in the Prayer-book calendar at this time. They made it a matter of congratulation among themselves that they had thrust out the Puritans, and got in Bel and the Dragon.

It was a disgraceful deed, because the ejected ministers were, many of them, men of such ability and attainments, that great sacrifices ought to have been made in order to retain them in the Church. Baxter, Poolc, Manton, Bates, Calamy, Brooks, Watson, Charnock, Caryl, Howe, Flavel, Bridge, Jenkyn, Owen, Goodwin, are names whose praise is even now in all the churches. The men who turned them out were not to be compared to them. The names of the vast majority of them are hardly known. But they had power on their side, and they were resolved to use it.

It was a disgraceful deed, because it showed the world that the leaders of the Church of England, like the Bourbons in modern times, had learned nothing and forgotten nothing during their exile. They had not forgotten the old bad ways of Laud, which had brought such misery on England. They had not learned that conciliation and concession are the most becoming graces in the rulers of a church, and that persecution, in the long run, is sure to be a losing game.

I dare not dwell longer on this point. I might easily bring forward more illustrations of this sad feature in Baxter's times. I might tell you of the infamous Oxford Act, in 1665, which forbade the unhappy ejected ministers to live within five miles of any corporate town, or of any place where they had formerly preached. But enough has been said to show you that when I spoke of the suicidal blindness of the Church of England, I did not speak without cause. The consequences of this blindness are manifest to any one who knows England. The divided state of Protestantism

in this country, is of itself a great fact, which speaks volumes.

Against the policy of the ruling party in the Church of England, under the Stuarts, I always shall protest. I do not feel the scruples which Baxter and his ejected brethren felt about the Act of Uniformity. Much as I respect them, I think them wrong and misguided in their judgments. But I think that Archbishop Sheldon, and the men who refused to go one step to meet them, were far more wrong and far more misguided. I believe they did an injury to the cause of true religion in England, which will probably never be repaired, by sowing the seeds of endless divisions. They were the men who laid the foundation of English dissent. I believe they recklessly threw away a golden opportunity of doing good. They might easily have made my own beloved Church far more effective and far more useful than she ever has been, by wise and timely concessions. They refused to do this, and, instead of a healing measure, brought forward their unhappy Act of Uniformity. I disavow

any sympathy with their proceedings, and can never think of them without the deepest regret.

I can not leave the subject of Baxter's times without offering you one piece of counsel. I advise you, then, not to believe every thing you may happen to read on the subject of the times of the Stuarts. There are no times, perhaps, about which prejudice and party-spirit have so warped the judgment and jaundiced the eye-sight of historians. If any one want a really fair and impartial history of the times, I strongly advise him to read Marsden's "History of the Puritans." I regard these two volumes as the most valuable addition which has been made to our stock of religious history in modern times.

II. And now let me turn from Baxter's times to Baxter himself. Without some knowledge of the times, you would hardly understand the character and conduct of the man. A few plain facts about the man will be more likely than any thing I can say to fasten in your minds the times.

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Richard Baxter was the son of a small landed proprietor of Eaton Constantine, in Shropshire, and was born, in 1615, at Rowton, in the same county, where Mr. Adeney, his mother's father, resided.

He seems to have been under religious impressions from a very early period of his life, and for this, under God, he was indebted to the training of a pious father. Shropshire was a very dark, ungodly country in those days. The ministers were generally ignorant, graceless, and unable to preach; and the people, as might be expected, were profligate, and despisers of them that were good. In Eaton Constantine, the parishioners spent the greater part of the Lord's day in dancing round a Maypole near old Mr. Baxter's door, to his great distress and annoyance. Yet even here grace triumphed over the world in the case of his son, and he was added to the noblest host of those who serve the Lord from their youth.

It is always interesting to observe the names of religious books when God is pleased to use them in bringing souls to the knowledge of

himself. The books which had the most effect on Baxter, were Bunney's "Resolution;" Perkins "On Repentance, on Living and Dying well, and on the Government of the Tongue;" Culverwell "On faith;" and Sibbs' "Bruised Reed." Disease and the prospect of death did much to carry on the spiritual work within him. He says in his Autobiography, "Weakness and pain helped me to study how to die. That set me on studying how to live, and that on studying the doctrines from which I must fetch my motives and my comforts."

At the age of twenty-two he was ordained a clergyman by Thornborough, bishop of Worcester. He had never had the advantage of an university education. A free-school at Wroxeter, and a private tutor at Ludlow, had done something for him; and his own insatiable love of study had done a good deal more. He, probably, entered the ministry far better furnished with theological learning than most young men of his day. He certainly entered it with qualifications far better than a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. He entered it



truly moved by the Holy Ghost, and a converted man. He says himself, "I knew that the want of academical honors and degrees were like to make me contemptible with the most. But yet, expecting to be so quickly in another world, the great concernment of miserable souls did prevail with me against all impediments. And being conscious of a thirsty desire of men's conscience and salvation, I resolved, that if one or two souls only might be won to God, it would easily recompense all the dishonor which, for want of titles, I might undergo from men."

From the time of his ordination to his death, Baxter's life was a constant series of strange vicissitudes, and intense physical and mental exertions. Sometimes in prosperity, and sometimes in adversity—sometimes praised and sometimes persecuted—at one period catechising in the lanes of Kidderminster, at another disputing with bishops in the Savoy Conference—one year writing the "Saint's Rest," at the point of death, in a quiet country house, another year a marching chaplain to a regiment

in Cromwell's army—one day offered a bishopric by Charles II., another cast out of the Church by the Act of Uniformity—one year arguing for monarchy with Cromwell, and telling him it was a blessing, another tried before Jeffreys on a charge of seditious writing—one time living quietly at Acton in the society of Judge Hale, at another languishing in prison under some atrocious ecclesiastical persecution—one day having public discussions about infant baptism with Mr. Tombes in Bewdley Church, another holding the reading-desk of Amersham Church from morning to night against the theological arguments of Antinomian dragoons in the gallery—sometimes preaching the plainest doctrines, sometimes handling the most abstruse metaphysical points—sometimes writing folio for the learned, sometimes writing broad-sheets for the poor—never, perhaps, did any Christian minister fill so many various positions; and never, certainly, did any one come out of them all with such an unblemished reputation. Always suffering under incurable disease, and seldom long

out of pain—always working his mind to the uttermost, and never idle for a day—seemingly overwhelmed with business, and yet never refusing new work—living in the midst of the most exciting scenes, and yet holding daily converse with God—not sufficiently a partisan to satisfy any side, and yet feared and courted by all—too much of a Royalist to please the Parliamentary party, and yet too much connected with the Parliament and too holy to be popular with the Cavaliers—too much of an Episcopalian to satisfy the violent portion of the Puritan body, and too much of a Puritan to be trusted by the bishops—never, probably, did Christian man enjoy so little rest, though serving God with a pure conscience, as did Richard Baxter.

In 1638 he began his ministry, by preaching in the Upper Church at Dudley. There he continued a year. From Dudley he removed to Bridgnorth. There he continued a year and three quarters. From Bridgnorth he removed to Kidderminster. From thence, after two years, he retired to Coventry, at the

beginning of the Commonwealth troubles, and awaited the progress of the civil war. From Coventry, after the battle of Naseby, he joined the Parliamentary army in the capacity of regimental chaplain. He took this office in the vain hope that he might do some good among the soldiers, and counteract the ambitious designs of Cromwell and his friends. He was obliged by illness to give up his chaplaincy in 1646, and lingered for some months between life and death at the hospitable houses of Sir John Coke of Melbourne, in Derbyshire, and Sir Thomas Rous of Rouslench, in Worcestershire. At the end of 1646 he returned to Kidderminster, and there continued laboring indefatigably as parish minister for fourteen years. In 1660 he left Kidderminster for London, and took an active part in promoting the restoration of Charles II., and was made one of the king's chaplains. In London, he preached successively at St. Dunstan's, Black Friars', and St. Bride's. Shortly after this he was offered the bishopric of Hereford, but thought fit to refuse it. In 1662, he

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was one of the two thousand ministers who were turned out of the Church by the Act of Uniformity. Immediately after his ejection he married a wife, who seems to have been every way worthy of him, and who was spared to be his loving and faithful companion for nineteen years. Her name was Margaret Charlton, of Apley Castle, in Shropshire. After this he lived in various places in and about London—at Acton, Totteridge, Bloomsbury, and at last in Charterhouse Square. The disgraceful treatment of his enemies made it almost impossible for him to have any certain dwelling-place. Once, at this period of his life, he was offered a Scotch bishopric, or the mastership of a Scotch university, but declined both offices. With few exceptions, the last twenty-nine years of his life were embittered by repeated prosecutions, fines, imprisonment, and harassing controversies. When he could he preached, and when he could not preach he wrote books; but something he was always doing. The Revolution and accession of William III. brought him some little respite from

persecution, and death at last removed the good old man to that place "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest," in the year 1691, and the seventy-sixth year of his age.

Such is a brief outline of the life of one of the most distinguished Puritans who lived under the Stuarts, and one of the most devoted ministers of the Gospel this country has ever seen. It is an outline which you will readily believe might be filled up to an indefinite length. I can not, of course, pretend to do more than call your attention to a few leading particulars. If I do not tell you more it is not from want of matter but of time. But if any one wishes to know why Baxter's name stands so high as it does in the list of English worthies, I ask him to listen to me for a few minutes, and I will soon show him cause.

For one thing, you must know, Baxter was a man of most *eminent personal holiness*. Few men have ever lived before the eyes of the world for fifty or sixty years, as he did, and left so fair and unblemished a reputation.

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Bitterly and cruelly as many hated him, they could find no fault in the man, except as concerning the law of his God. He seems to have been holy in all the relations of life, and in all the circumstances in which man can be placed—holy as a son, a husband, a minister, and a friend—holy in prosperity and in adversity, in sickness and in health, in youth and in old age. It is a fine saying of Orme, in his admirable life of him, that he was in the highest sense, a most “unearthly” man. He lived with God, and Christ, and heaven, and death, and judgment, and eternity, continually before his eyes. He cared nothing for the good things of this world: a bishopric, with all its emoluments and honors, had no charms for him. He cared nothing for the enmity of the world: no fear of man’s displeasure ever turned him an inch out of his way. He was singularly independent of man’s praise or blame. He could be as bold as a lion in the presence of Cromwell, or Charles II. and his bishops; and yet he could be gentle as a lamb with poor people seeking how to be saved.

He could be zealous as a Crusader for the rights of conscience, and yet he was of so catholic a spirit that he loved all who loved Jesus Christ in sincerity. "Be it by Conformists or by Non-Conformists," he would say, "I rejoice that Christ is preached." He was a truly humble man. To one who wrote to him expressing admiration for his character, he replied, "You admire one you do not know: knowledge would cure your error." So fair an epistle of Christ, considering the amazing trials of patience he had to go through, this country has seldom seen as Richard Baxter. Young men, I charge you to remember this point in Baxter's character. No argument has such lasting power with the world as a holy and consistent life. Remember that this holiness was attained by a man of like passions with yourselves. Let Baxter be an encouragement and an example. Remember the Lord God of Baxter is not changed.

For another thing, Baxter was *one of the most powerful preachers that ever addressed an English Congregation*. He seems to have pos-



sessed all the gifts which are generally considered to make a perfect master of assemblies. He had an amazing fluency—an enormous store of matter—a most clear and lucid style—an unlimited command of forcible language—a pithy, pointed, emphatic way of presenting truth—a singularly moving and pathetic voice—and an earnestness of manner which swept every thing before it like a torrent. He used to say, “It must be serious preaching which will make men serious in hearing and obeying it.”

Two well-known lines of his show you the man—

“I’ll preach as though I ne’er should preach again,  
And as a dying man to dying men.”

Dr. Bates, a cotemporary, says of him, “He had a marvelous felicity and copiousness in speaking. There was a noble negligence in his style. His great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words. He despised flashy oratory. But his expressions were so clear and powerful, so convincing to the under-

standing, so entering into the soul, so engaging the affections, that those were as deaf as an adder who were not charmed by so wise a charmer."

The effects that his preaching produced were those which such preaching always has produced and always will. As it was under the pulpit of Latimer and Whitfield, so it was under the pulpit of Baxter. At Dudley, the poor nailers would not only crowd the church, but even hang upon the windows and the leads without. At Kidderminster, it became necessary to build five new galleries, in order to accommodate the congregation. In London, the crowds who attended his ministry were so large, that it was sometimes dangerous, and often impossible, to be one of his hearers.

Once when he was about to preach at St. Lawrence Jewry, he sent word to Mr. Vines the minister, that the Earl of Suffolk and Lord Broghill were coming in a coach with him, and would be glad to have seats. But when he and his noble companions reached the door, the crowd had so little respect for persons, that

the two peers had to go home again because they could not get within hearing. Mr. Vines himself was obliged to get up into the pulpit, and sit behind the preacher, from want of room; and Baxter actually preached standing between Mr. Vines' feet.

On another occasion, when he was preaching to an enormous crowd in St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street, he made a striking use of an incident which took place during the sermon. A piece of brick fell down in the steeple, and an alarm was raised that the church, an old and rotten building, was falling. Scarcely was the alarm allayed, when a bench, on which some people were standing, broke with their weight, and the confusion was worse than ever. Many crowded to the doors to get out, and all were in a state of panic. One old woman was heard loudly asking God forgiveness for having come to the church at all, and promising, if she only got out safe, never to come there again. In the midst of all the confusion Baxter alone was calm and unmoved. As soon as order was restored, he rose and said, "We are in the

service of God to prepare ourselves that we may be fearless at the great noise of the dissolving world, when the heavens shall pass away, and the elements melt with fervent heat." This was Baxter all over. This was the kind of thing he had not only grace, but gifts and nerve, to do. He always spoke like one who saw God, and felt death at his back. Such a man will seldom fail to preach well. Such a man will seldom be in want of hearers. Such a man deserves to be embalmed in the memory of all who want to know what God can do for a child of Adam by his Spirit. Such a man deserves to be praised.

For another thing, you must know, that Baxter was *one of the most successful pastors of a parish and congregation that ever lived*. When he came to Kidderminster, he found it a dark, ignorant, immoral, irreligious place, containing, perhaps, three thousand inhabitants. When he left it at the end of fourteen years, he had completely turned the parish upside down. "The place before his coming," says Dr. Bates, "was like a piece of dry and bar-

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ren earth; but, by the blessing of Heaven upon his labor, the face of Paradise appeared there. 'The bad were changed to good, and the good to better.'" The number of his regular communicants averaged six hundred. "Of these," Baxter tells us, "there were not twelve of whom I had not good hope as to their sincerity." The Lord's day was thoroughly revered and observed. It was said, "You might have heard an hundred families singing psalms and repeating sermons as you passed through the streets." When he came there, there was about one family in a street which worshiped God at home. When he went away, there were some streets in which there was not more than one family on a side that did not do it: and this was the case even with inns and public-houses. Even of the irreligious families, there were very few which had not some converted relations. "Some of the poor people became so well versed in theology, that they understood the whole body of divinity, and were able to judge difficult controversies. Some were so able in prayer,

that few ministers could match them in order, fullness, apt expressions, holy oratory and fervor. Best of all, the temper of their minds and the innocency of their lives were much more laudable even than their gifts.

The grand instrument to which Baxter used to attribute this astounding success was his system of household visitation and regular private conference with his parishioners. No doubt this did immense good, and the more so because it was a new thing in those days. Nevertheless, there is no denying the fact that the most elaborate parochial machinery of modern times has never produced such effects as those you have just heard of at Kidderminster. And the true account of this I believe to be, that no parish has ever had such a wonderful mainspring in the middle of it as Baxter was. While some divines were wrangling about the divine right of Episcopacy or Presbytery, or splitting hairs about reprobation and free-will, Baxter was always visiting from house to house, and beseeching men, for Christ's sake, to be reconciled to God and flee

from the wrath to come. While others were entangling themselves in politics, and burying their dead amid the potsherds of the earth, Baxter was living a crucified life and daily preaching the Gospel. I suspect he was the best and wisest pastor that an English parish has ever had, and a model that many of us would do well to follow. Once more I say, have I not a right to tell you such a polished instrument as this ought not to be allowed to rust in oblivion? Such a man as this deserves to be praised.

For another thing, you must know that Baxter was *one of the most diligent theological writers the world has ever seen*. Few have the slightest idea of the immense number of works in divinity which he wrote in the fifty years of his active life. It is reckoned that they would fill sixty octavo volumes, comprising not less than thirty-five thousand closely printed pages. These works, no doubt, are not all of equal merit, and many of them probably will never repay perusal. Like the ships from Tarshish, they contain not only gold, and sil-

ver, and ivory, but also a large mass of apes and peacocks. Still, after every deduction, the writings of Baxter generally contain a great mass of solid truths, and truths often handled in a most striking and masterly way. Dr. Barrow, no mean judge, says, "That his practical writings were never mended, and his controversial ones seldom confuted." Bishop Wilkins declares, "That he had cultivated every subject he had handled—that if he had lived in the primitive times he would have been one of the fathers of the Church, and that it was enough for one age to produce such a man as Mr. Baxter." That great and good man, William Wilberforce, says, "His practical writings are a treasury of Christian wisdom;" and he adds, "I must beg to class among the brightest ornaments of the Church of England this great man, who was so shamefully ejected from the Church in 1662."

No one man has certainly ever written three such books as Baxter's three master-pieces, "The Saint's Rest."\* "The Reformed Pastor,"

\* The Editions of this work heretofore in circulation are



and "The Call to the Unconverted." I believe they have been made blessings to thousands of souls, and are alone sufficient to place the author in the foremost rank of theological writers. Of the "Call to the Unconverted," twenty thousand were printed in one year. Six brothers were converted at one time by reading it. Eliot, the missionary thought so highly of it, that he translated it into the Indian language, the first book after the Bible. And really, when you consider that all Baxter's writings were composed in the midst of intense labor, and fierce persecution, and often under the pressure of heavy bodily disease, the wonder is not only that he wrote so much, but that so much of what he wrote should be so good. Such wonderful diligence and redemption of time the world has never seen. Once more I say, have I not a right to tell you such a man deserves to be praised?

For another thing, you must know that

abridgments only, but the complete work, just as Baxter wrote it has just been published in New York.—*Am. Publishers.*

Baxter was *one of the most patient martyrs for conscience' sake, that England has ever seen.* Of course I do not mean that he was called upon to seal his faith with his blood, as our Protestant reformers were. But there is such a thing as wearing out the saints of the Most High by persecutions and prisons, as well as shedding the blood of the saints. There is a dying daily, which, to some natures, is worse even than dying at the stake. If any thing tries faith and patience, I believe it to be the constant dropping of such wearing persecution as Baxter had to endure for nearly the last twenty-nine years of his life. He had robbed no one. He had murdered no one. He had injured no one. He held no heresy. He believed all the articles of the Christian faith. And yet no thief or felon in the present day was ever so shamefully treated as this good man. To tell you how often he was summoned, fined, silenced, imprisoned, driven from one place to another, would be an endless task. To describe all the hideous perversions of justice to which he was subjected, would be

both painful and unprofitable. I will only allow myself to give one instance, and that shall be his trial before Chief Justice Jeffreys.

Baxter was tried before Jeffreys in 1685, at Westminster Hall, on a charge of having published seditious matter, reflecting on the bishops, in a paraphrase on the New Testament, which he had recently brought out. A more unfounded charge could not have been made. The book is still extant, and any one will see at a glance that the alleged seditious passages do not prove the case. Fox, in his history of James II.'s reign, tells us plainly, that "the real motive for bringing him to trial was the desire of punishing an eminent dissenting teacher, whose reputation was high among his sect, and who was supposed to favor the political opinions of the Whigs."

A long and graphic account of the trial was drawn up by a bystander, and it gives so vivid a picture of the administration of justice in Baxter's days, that it may be useful to give a few short extracts from it.

From the very opening of the trial it was clear which way the verdict was intended to go. The Lord Chief Justice behaved as if he were counsel for the prosecution, and not judge. He condescended to use abusive language toward the defendant, such as was more suited to Billingsgate than a court of law. One after another the counsel for the defense were brow-beaten, silenced, and put down, or else interrupted by violent invectives against Baxter.

At one time the Lord Chief Justice exclaimed:—"This is an old rogue, who hath poisoned the world with his Kidderminster doctrine. He encouraged all the women and maids to bring their bodkins and thimbles to carry on war against the King of ever blessed memory. An old schismatical knave! A hypocritical villain!"

By-and-by he called Baxter "an old block-head, an unthankful villain, a conceited, stubborn, fanatical dog. Hang him!" he said, "this one old fellow hath cast more reproaches on the constitution and discipline of our Church

than will be wiped off for this hundred years. But I'll handle him for it, for he deserves to be whipped through the city."

Shortly afterward, when Baxter began to say a few words on his own behalf, Jeffreys stopped him, crying out, "Richard, Richard, dost thou think we'll hear thee poison the Court? Richard, thou art an old fellow, an old knave; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, every one as full of sedition—I might say treason, as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing trade forty years ago, it had been happy. Thou pretendest to be a preacher of the gospel of peace, and thou hast one foot in the grave; it is time for thee to think what kind of an account thou intendest to give. But leave thee to thyself and I see thou wilt go on as thou hast begun! but, by the grace of God, I will look after thee. I know thou hast a mighty party, and I see a great many of the brotherhood in corners, waiting to see what will become of this mighty dove; but, by the grace of God Almighty, I'll crush you all!

Come, what do you say for yourself, you old knave? Come, speak up!"

All this, and much more of the same kind, and even worse, went on at Baxter's trial. The extracts I have given form but a small portion of the whole account.

It is needless to say, that in such a court as this Baxter was at once found guilty. He was fined five hundred marks, which it was known he could not pay—condemned to lie in prison till he paid it, and bound over to good behavior for seven years. And the issue of the matter was, that this poor, old, diseased, childless widower, of threescore years and ten, lay for two years in Southwark jail.

It is needless, I hope, to tell you, in the year 1853, that such a trial as this was a disgrace to the judicial bench of England, and a still greater disgrace to those persons with whom the information originated, understood commonly to have been Sherlock and L'Es-trange. Thank God! I trust England, at any rate, has bid a long farewell to such trials as these, whatever may be done in Italy! Wretch-

ed, indeed, is that country where low, sneaking informers are encouraged;—where the terrors of the law are directed more against holiness, and scriptural religion, and freedom of thought, than against vice and immorality; and where the seat of justice is used for the advancement of political purposes, or the gratification of petty ecclesiastical spite!

But it is right that you should know that under all this foul injustice and persecution, Baxter's grace and patience never failed him. "These things," he said, in Westminster Hall, "will surely be understood one day, what fools one sort of Protestants are made to persecute the other." When he was reviled, he reviled not again. He returned blessing for cursing, and prayer for ill-usage. Few martyrs have ever glorified God so much in their one day's fire as Richard Baxter did for twenty years under the ill usage of the so-called Protestants! Once more, I say, have I not a right to tell you such a man as this deserves to be remembered? Such a man deserves to be praised.

And now I hope you will consider I have proved my case. I trust you will allow that there are men who lived in times long gone by, whose character it is useful to review, and that Baxter is undeniably one of them—a real man—a true spiritual hero.

I do not ask you to regard him as a perfect and faultless being, any more than Cranmer, or Calvin, or Knox, or Wesley. I do not at all defend some of Baxter's doctrinal statements. He tried to systematize things which can not be systematized, and he failed. You will not find such a clear, full gospel in his writings, as in those of Owen, and Bridge, and Traill. I do not think he was always right in his judgment. I regard his refusal of a bishopric as a huge mistake. By that refusal he rejected a glorious opportunity of doing good. Had Baxter been on the episcopal bench, and in the House of Lords, I do not believe the Act of Uniformity would ever have passed.

But, in a world like this you must take true Christians as they are, and be thankful for what they are. It is not given to mortal man



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to be faultless. Take Baxter for all together, and there are few English ministers of the Gospel whose names deserve to stand higher than his. Some have excelled him in some gifts, and some in others. But it is seldom that so many gifts are to be found united in one man as they are in Baxter. Eminent personal holiness—amazing power as a preacher—unrivaled pastoral skill—indefatigable diligence as a writer—meekness and patience under undeserved persecution—all meet together in the character of this one man. Place him high in your list of great and good men. Give him the honor he deserves. Reekon it no small thing to be the fellow-countryman of Richard Baxter.

And here let me remark that few bodies of men are under greater obligation to Baxter and his friends than the body I have the honor to address this night—the Young Men's Christian Association.

You are allowed to associate together upon evangelical principles, and for religious ends, and no one hinders you. You are allowed to meet in large numbers, and take sweet counsel

with one another, and strengthen one another's hands in the service of Christ, and no one interferes to prevent you. You are allowed to assemble for devotional purposes, to read the Word of God, and stir one another up to perseverance in the faith, in the midst of this great Babylon, and no one dares to prohibit you. How great are all these privileges! How incalculable the benefit of union, conference, sympathy, and encouragement to a young man launching forth on the stormy waters of this great city! Happy are the cities where such institutions exist! Happy are the young men whom God inclines to join them! Blessed is the labor of those by whose care and attention these institutions are kept together! They are sowing precious seed. They may sow with much toil and discouragement, but they may be sure they are sowing seed which shall yet bear fruit after many days.

But never, never forget to whom you are indebted for all this liberty of conference and association which you enjoy. Never forget that there was a time when informers would

have tracked all your steps—when constables and soldiers would have rudely broken up your gatherings at Gresham Street, Saville Row, and Exeter Hall, and when your proceedings would have entailed upon you pains, penalties, fines, and imprisonments. Never forget that the happy and profitable freedom which you enjoy was only won by long-continued and intense struggles, by the blood and sufferings of noble-minded men, of whom the world was not worthy; and never forget that the men who won this freedom for you was those much-abused men—the Puritans.

Yes! you all owe a debt to the Puritans, which, I trust, you will never refuse to acknowledge. You live in days when many are disposed to run them down. As you travel through life, you will often hear them derided and abused as seditious, rebellious levelers in the things of Cæsar, and ignorant, fanatical, hypocritical enthusiasts in the things of God. You will often hear some semi-popish strippling, fresh from Oxford, puffed up with new-fledged views of what he calls “apostolical

succession," and proud of a little official authority, depreciating and sneering at the Puritans, as men alike destitute of learning and true religion, while, in reality, he is scarcely worthy to sit at their feet, and carry their books. To all such calumnies and false statements, I trust you will never give heed.

Settle it down in your minds that for sound doctrine, spirituality, and learning combined, the Puritans stand at the head of English divines. Settle it down in your minds, that, with all their faults, weaknesses, and defects, they alone kept the lamp of pure, evangelical religion burning in this country in the times of the Stuarts—they alone prevented Laud's popish inclinations carrying England back into the arms of Rome. Settle it down in your minds that they fought the battle of religious freedom, of which we are reaping such fruits—that they crushed the wretched spirit of inquisitorial persecution which misguided high-Churchmen tried to introduce into this land. Give them the honor they deserve. Suffer no man to speak lightly of them in

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your presence. Remember your obligations to them. Reverence their memory. Stand up boldly for their reputation. Never be afraid to plead their cause. It is the cause of pure, evangelical religion. It is the cause of an open Bible, and liberty to meet, and read, and pray together. It is the cause of liberty of conscience. All these are bound up with Baxter and the Puritans. Remember this, and give them their due.

And now let me conclude this lecture by telling you that Baxter's last days were almost as remarkable as any in his life. He went down to his grave as calmly and peacefully as the setting sun in summer. His deathbed was a glorious deathbed indeed.

I like to know how great men die. I am not satisfied with knowing that men are great in the plenitude of riches and honor. I want to know whether they were great in view of the tomb. I do not want merely to know how men meet kings, and bishops, and parliaments; I want to know how they meet the king of terrors, and how they feel in the prospect of

standing before the King of kings. I suspect that greatness which forsakes a man at last. I like to know how great men die, and I may be allowed, I hope, to dwell for a few moments on Baxter's death.

Few deathbeds, perhaps, were ever more truly instructive than that of this good old Puritan. His friend, Dr. Bates, has given a full description of it, and I think a few facts drawn from it may prove a suitable conclusion to this evening's lecture.

Baxter's last illness found him quietly living in Charterhouse Square, close to the meeting-house of his friend, Dr. Sylvester. Here for the four years preceding his death, he was allowed to enjoy great quietness. The liberty of preaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, no man forbidding him, was at length fully conceded. "Here," says Dr. Calamy, "he used to preach with great freedom about another world, like one that had been there, and was come as a sort of express to make a report of it." The storm of persecution was at length over. The winds and

waves that had so long burst over him were at last lulled. The saintly old Puritan was mercifully allowed to go down to the banks of Jordan in a great calm.

He continued to preach so long, notwithstanding his wasted body, that the last time he almost died in the pulpit. When disease compelled him to give over his beloved work, and take to his dying bed, it found him the same man that he had been for fifty years. His last hours were spent in preparing others and himself to meet God. He said to the friends who visited him, "You come hither to learn to die. I am not the only person that must go this way. Have a care of this vain and deceitful world, and the lust of the flesh. Be sure you choose God for your portion, heaven for your home, God's glory for your end, God's word for your rule, and then you need never fear but we shall meet again with comfort."

Never was penitent sinner more humble, and never was sincere believer more calm and comfortable. He said, "God may justly con-

demn me for the best duty I ever did; and all my hopes are from the free mercy of God in Christ." He had often said before, "I can more readily believe that God will forgive me, than I can forgive myself."

After a slumber, he waked saying, "I shall rest from my labors." A minister present said, "And your works will follow you." He replied, "No works; I will leave out works, if God will grant me the other." When a friend comforted him with the remembrance of the good many had received from his writings, he replied, "I was but a pen in God's hand, and what praise is due to a pen?"

When extremity of pain made him long for death, he would check himself and say, "It is not fit for me to prescribe: when Thou wilt—what Thou wilt—how Thou wilt!" Being in great anguish, he said, "How unsearchable are his ways!" and then he said to his friends, "do not think the worse of religion for what you see me suffer."

Being often asked by his friend how it was with his inward man, he replied, "I have a well-



grounded assurance of my eternal happiness, and great peace and comfort within; but it is my trouble that I can not triumphantly express it, by reason of extreme pain." He added, "Flesh must perish, and we must feel the perishing; and though my judgment submit, sense will make me groan."

Being asked by a nobleman whether he had great joy from his believing apprehension of the invisible state, he replied, "What else, think you, Christianity serves for?" And then he added, "that the consideration of the Deity, in his glory and greatness, was too high for our thoughts; but the consideration of the Son of God in our nature, and of the saints in heaven whom we knew and loved, did much sweeten and familiarize heaven to him." The description of heaven in the 12th chapter of Hebrews, beginning with the "innumerable company of angels," and ending with "Jesus the Mediator, and the blood of sprinkling," was very comfortable to him. "That scripture," he said, "deserves a thousand thousand thoughts!" And then he added, "Oh! how

comfortable is that promise, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things God hath laid up for them that love him!'"

At another time he said, "That he found great comfort and sweetness in repeating the words of the Lord's Prayer, and was sorry that some good men were prejudiced against the use of it; for there were all necessary petitions for soul and body contained in it."

He gave excellent counsel to young ministers who visited him on his deathbed. He used to pray earnestly "that God would bless their labors, and make them very successful in converting many souls to Christ." He expressed great joy in the hope that God would do a great deal of good by them, and that they would be of moderate, peaceful spirits.

He did not forget the world he was leaving. He frequently prayed "that God would be merciful to this miserable, distracted world; and that he would preserve his Church and interest in it."

He advised his friends "to beware of self-

conceitedness as a sin likely to ruin this nation." Being asked at the same time whether he had altered his mind in controversial points, he replied, "Those that please may know my mind in my writings. What I have done was not for my own reputation, but the glory of God."

The day before he died, Dr. Bates visited him; and on his saying some words of comfort, he replied, "I have pain—there is no arguing against sense; but I have peace—I have peace!" Bates told him he was going to his long-desired home. He answered, "I believe—I believe!" He expressed great willingness to die. During his sickness, when the question was asked how he did, his reply was, "Almost well!" or else, "Better than I deserve to be, but not so well as I hope to be." His last words were addressed to Dr. Sylvester, "The Lord teach you how to die!"

On Tuesday the 8th of December, 1691, Baxter's warfare was accomplished; and at length he entered what he had so beautifully described—the saint's everlasting rest.

He was buried at Christchurch, amid the tears of many who knew his worth, if the world and the Established Church of that day did not. The funeral was that kind of funeral which is above all in real honor: "devout men carried him to his grave, and made great lamentation over him."

He left no family, but he left behind him hundreds of spiritual sons and daughters. He left works which are still owned by God in every part of the world to the awakening and edification of immortal souls. Thousands, I doubt not, will stand up in the morning of the resurrection, and thank God for the grace and gifts bestowed on the old Puritan of Shropshire. He left a name which must always be dear to every lover of holiness, and every friend of religious liberty. No Englishman, perhaps, ever exemplified the one, or promoted the other, more truly and really than did Richard Baxter.

Let me conclude by quoting the last paragraph of Dr. Bates' funeral sermon on the occasion of Baxter's death:—"Blessed be the

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gracious God, that he was pleased to prolong the life of his servant, so useful and beneficial to the world, to a full age, and that he brought him slowly and safely to heaven. I shall conclude this account with my own deliberate wish: May I live the short remainder of my life as entirely to the glory of God as he lived; and when I shall come to the period of my life, may I die in the same blessed peace wherein he died; may I be with him in the kingdom of light and love forever."

LONDON, February 1, 1853.



III.

LIFE AND LABORS

OF

George Whitefield.





### III.

## George Whitefield.

THERE are some men in the pages of history, whose greatness no person of common sense thinks of disputing. They tower above the herd of mankind, like the Pyramids, the Parthenon, and the Colosseum, among buildings. Such men were Luther and Augustine, Gustavus Adolphus and George Washington, Columbus and Sir Isaac Newton. He who questions *their* greatness must be content to be thought very ignorant, very prejudiced, or very eccentric. Public opinion has come to a conclusion about them—they were great men.

But there are also great men whose reputation lies buried under a heap of cotemporary ill-will and misrepresentation. The world does not appreciate them, because the world does

not know their real worth. Their characters have come down to us through poisoned channels. Their portraits have been drawn by the ill-natured hand of enemies. Their faults have been exaggerated. Their excellences have been maliciously kept back and suppressed. Like the famous sculptures of Nineveh, they need the hand of some literary Layard to clear away the rubbish that has accumulated round their names, and show them to the world in their fair proportions. Such men were Vigilantius and Wickliffe. Such men were Oliver Cromwell and many of the Puritans. And such a man was George Whitefield.

There are few men whose characters have suffered so much from ignorance and misrepresentation of the truth as Whitefield's.

That he was a famous Methodist, and ally of John Wesley, in the last century; that he was much run after by ignorant people, for his preaching; that many thought him an enthusiast and fanatic; all this is about as much as most Englishmen know.

But that he was one of the principal cham-

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pions of evangelical religion in the eighteenth century in our own country; that he was one of the most powerful and effective preachers that ever lived; that he was a man of extraordinary singleness of eye, and devotedness to the interests of true religion; that he was a regularly ordained clergyman of the Church of England, and would always have worked in the Church, if the Church had not, most unwisely, shut him out; all these are things, of which few people seem aware. And yet, after calm examination of his life and writings, I am satisfied this is the true account that ought to be given of George Whitefield.

My chief desire is to assist in forming a just estimate of Whitefield's worth. I wish to lend a helping hand toward raising his name from the undeservedly low place which is commonly assigned to it. I wish to place him before your eyes as a noble specimen of what the grace of God can enable one man to do. I want you to treasure up his name in your memories, as one of the brightest in that company of departed saints who were, in their day,

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patterns of good works, and of whom the world was not worthy.

I propose, therefore, without further preface, to give you a hasty sketch of Whitefield's *times*, Whitefield's *life*, Whitefield's *religion*, Whitefield's *preaching*, and Whitefield's *actual work on earth*.

I. The story of Whitefield's times is one that should often be told. Without it no body is qualified to form an opinion either as to the man or his acts. Conduct that in one kind of times may seem rash, extravagant, and indiscreet, in another may be wise, prudent, and even absolutely necessary. In forming your opinion of the comparative merits of Christian men, never forget the old rule: "Distinguish between times." Place yourself in each man's position. Do not judge what was a right course of action in other times, by what seems a right course of action in your own.

Now, the times when Whitefield lived were, unquestionably, the worst times that have ever been known in this country, since the Protest-

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ant Reformation. There never was a greater mistake than to talk of "the good old times." The times of the eighteenth century, at any rate, were "bad old times," unmistakably. Whitefield was born in 1714. He died in 1770. It is not saying too much to assert, that this was precisely the darkest age that England has passed through in the last three hundred years. Any thing more deplorable than the condition of the country, as to religion, morality, and high principle, from 1700 to about the era of the French Revolution, it is very difficult to conceive.

The state of religion in the Established Church can only be compared to that of a frozen or palsied carcass. *There* were the time-honored formularies which the wisdom of the Reformers had provided. *There* were the services and lessons from Scripture, just in the same order as we have them now. But as to preaching the Gospel in the Established Church, there was almost none. The distinguishing doctrines of Christianity—the atonement, the work and office of Christ and the

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Spirit—were comparatively lost sight of. The vast majority of sermons were miserable moral essays, utterly devoid of any thing calculated to awaken, convert, save or sanctify souls. The curse of black Bartholomew-day seemed to rest upon our Church. For at least a century after casting out two thousand of the best ministers in England, our Establishment never prospered.

There were some learned and conscientious bishops at this era, beyond question. Such men were Secker, and Gibson, and Lowth, and Warburton, and Butler, and Horne. But even the best of them sadly misunderstood the requirements of the day they lived in. They spent their strength in writing apologies for Christianity, and contending against infidels. They could not see that, without the direct preaching of the essential doctrines of Christ's Gospel, their labors were all in vain. And, as to the majority of the bishops, they were potent for negative evil, but impotent for positive good; giants at stopping what they thought disorder, but infants at devising any thing to promote real order; mighty to repress

over-zealous attempts at evangelization, but weak to put in action any remedy for the evils of the age; eagle-eyed at detecting any unhappy wight who trod on the toes of a rubric or canon, but blind as bats to the flood of indolence and false doctrine with which their dioceses were every where deluged.

That there were many well-read, respectable and honorable men among the parochial clergy at this period, it would be wrong to deny. But few, it is to be feared, out of the whole number, preached Christ crucified in simplicity and sincerity. Many whose lives were decent and moral, were notoriously Arians, if not Socinians. Many were totally engrossed in secular pursuits; they neither did good themselves, nor liked any one else to do it for them. They hunted; they shot; they drank; they swore; they fiddled; they farmed; they toasted Church and King, and thought little or nothing about saving souls. And as for the man who dared to preach the doctrine of the Bible, the Articles, and the Homilies, he was sure to be set down as an enthusiast and fanatic.

The state of religion among the Dissenters was only a few degrees better than the state of the Church. The toleration which they enjoyed from William the Third's time was certainly productive of a very bad spiritual effect on them as a body. As soon as they ceased to be persecuted, they appear to have gone to sleep. The Baptist and Independent could still point to Gill, and Guyse, and Doddridge, and Watts, and a few more like-minded men. But the English Presbyterians were fast lapsing into Socinianism. And as to the great majority of nonconformists, it is vain to deny that they were very different men from Baxter, and Flavel, and Gurnall, and Trail. A generation of preachers arose who were very orthodox, but painfully cold; very conscientious, but very wanting in spirituality; very constant in their objections to the Established Church, but very careless about spreading vital Christianity.

I deeply feel the difficulty of conveying a correct impression of the times when Whitefield lived. I dislike over-statement as much as



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any one, but I am thoroughly persuaded it is not easy to make an over-statement on this branch of my subject.

These were the times when the highest personages in the realm lived openly in ways which were flatly contrary to the law of God, and no man rebuked them. No courts, I suppose, can be imagined more diametrically unlike than the courts of George I. and George II., and the court of Queen Victoria.

These were the times when profligacy and irreligion were reputable and respectable things. Judging from the description we have of men and manners in those days, a gentleman might have been defined as a creature who got drunk, gambled, swore, fought duels, and broke the seventh commandment incessantly. And for all this no one thought the worse of him.

These were the days when the men whom kings delighted to honor were Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, Walpole, and Newcastle. To be an infidel or a skeptic, to obtain power by intrigue, and to retain power by the grossest and

most notorious bribery, were considered no disqualifications at this era. Such was the utter want of religion, morality, and high principle in the land, that men such as these were not only tolerated, but praised.

These were the days when Hume, the historian, put forth his work, became famous, and got a pension. He was notoriously an infidel. These were the days when Sterne and Swift wrote their clever, but most indecent productions. Both were clergymen, and high in the Church; but the public saw no harm. These were the days when Fielding and Smollet were the popular authors, and the literary taste of high and low was suited by Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Joseph Andrews, and Tom Jones.

These were the days when Knox says, in his history of Christian Philosophy: "Some of the most learned men—the most voluminous writers on theological subjects—were *totally ignorant of Christianity*. They were ingenious heathen philosophers, assuming the name of Christians, and forcibly paganizing Christianity, for the sake of pleasing the world." These

were the days when Archbishop Drummond (1760) could talk of intricate and senseless questions, about the influence of the Spirit and power of grace, predestination, imputed righteousness, justification without works, and other opinions which have from the beginning, perplexed and perverted, debased, defiled, and wounded Christianity." These were the days when Bishop Warburton considered the teaching office of the Holy Ghost to be completed in the Holy Scripture, and that his sanctifying and comforting offices are chiefly confined to charity. Such were the leading ministers. What must the mass of teachers have been! Such were the *priests* of Whitefield's time. What must have been the *people*!

These were the days when there was an utter dearth of sound theological writing. The doctrines of the Reformers were trampled under-foot by men who occupied their chairs. The bread of the Church was eaten by men who flatly contradicted her Articles. The appetite of religious people was satisfied with "Tillotson's Sermons," and the "Whole Duty

of Man." A pension of two hundred pounds a year was actually given to Blair, of Edinburgh, for writing his most unchristian sermons. Ask any theological bookseller, and he will tell you that, generally speaking, no divinity is so worthless as that of the eighteenth century.

In fine, these were the days when there was no Society for promoting the increase of true religion, but the Christian Knowledge Society, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. And even their work was comparatively trifling. Nothing was done for the Jew. Nothing was done for the heathen. Nothing, almost, was done for the colonies. Nothing was done for the destitute part of our own country. Nothing was done for education. The Church slept. The dissenters slept. The pulpit slept. The religious press slept. The gates were left wide open. The walls were left unguarded. Infidelity stalked in. The Devil sowed tares broad-cast, and walked to and fro. The gentry gloried in their shame, and no man pointed out their wickedness.

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The people sinned with a high hand, and no man taught them better. Ignorance, profligacy, irreligion, and superstition were to be seen every where. Such were the times when Whitefield was raised up.

I know that this is a dreadful picture. I marvel God did not sweep away the Church altogether. But I believe that the picture is not one whit too highly colored. It is painful to expose such a state of things. But, for Whitefield's sake, the truth ought to be known. Justice has not been done to him, because the condition of the times he lived in is not considered. The times he lived in were extraordinary times, and required extraordinary means to be used. And whatever quiet men, sitting by their fireside in our day, may say to the contrary, I am satisfied that Whitefield was just the man for his times.

II. The story of Whitefield's life, which forms the next part of our subject, is one that is soon told. The facts and incidents of that life are

few and simple, and I shall not dwell upon them at any length.

Whitefield was born in 1714. Like many other great men, he was of very humble origin. His father and mother kept the Bell Inn, in the city of Gloucester. Whether there is such an inn now, I do not know. But, judging from Whitefield's account of his circumstances, it must formerly have been a very small concern.

Whitefield's early life seems to have been any thing but religious, though he had occasional fits of devout feeling. He speaks of himself as having been addicted to lying, filthy talking and foolish jesting. He confesses that he was a Sabbath-breaker, a theater-goer, a card-player, and a romance-reader. All this went on till he was twelve or fifteen years old.

At the age of twelve he was placed at a grammar-school in Gloucester. Little is known of his progress there, excepting the curious fact that even then he was remarkable for his good elocution and memory, and was selected

to make speeches before the corporation, at their annual visitations.

At the age of fifteen he appears to have become tired of Latin and Greek, and to have given up all hopes of ever becoming more than a tradesman. He ceased to take lessons in any thing but writing. He began to assist his mother in the public-house that she kept. "At length," he says, "I put on my blue apron, washed mops, cleaned rooms, and, in one word, became a professed common drawer for nigh a year and a half."

But God, who ordereth all things in heaven and earth, and called David from keeping sheep to be a king, had provided some better thing for Whitefield than the office of a pot-boy. Family disagreements interfered with his prospects at the Bell Inn. An old school-fellow stirred up again within him the desire of going to the University. And at length, after several providential circumstances had smoothed the way, he was launched, at the age of eighteen, at Oxford, in a position at that time much more humbling

than it is now, as a servitor at Pembroke College.

Whitefield's Oxford career seems to have been the turning-point in his life. According to his own journal, he had not been without religious convictions for two or three years before he went to Oxford. From the time of his entering Pembroke College, these convictions rapidly ripened into decided Christianity. He became marked for his attendance on all means of grace within his reach. He spent his leisure time in visiting the city prisons and doing good. He formed an acquaintance with the famous John Wesley and his brother Charles, which gave a color to the whole of his subsequent life. At one time he seems to have had a narrow escape from becoming a semi-papist, an ascetic, or a mystic. From this he seems to have been delivered, partly by the advice of wiser and more experienced Christians, and partly by reading such books as Scougal's "Life of God in the Soul of Man," Law's "Serious Call," Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," and Alleine's "Alarm to Un-



converted Sinners." At length, in 1736, at the early age of twenty-two, he was ordained deacon by Bishop Benson, of Gloucester, and began to run that ministerial race in which he never drew breath till he was laid in the grave.

His first sermon was preached in St. Mary-le-Crypt, Gloucester. It was said to have driven fifteen persons mad. Bishop Benson remarked, that he only hoped the madness might continue. He next accepted temporary duty at the Tower Chapel, London. While engaged there, he preached continually in many of the London churches, and among others, in the parish churches of Islington, Bishopsgate, St. Dunstan's, St. Margaret, Westminster, and Bow, Cheapside. From the very beginning he attained a degree of popularity such as no preacher, probably, before or since, has ever reached. To say that the churches were crowded when he preached, would be saying little. They were literally crammed to suffocation. An eye-witness said, "You might have walked on the people's heads."

From London he removed for a few months to Dummer, a little rural parish in Hampshire, near Basingstoke. From Dummer he sailed for the colony of Georgia, in North America, after visiting Gloucester and Bristol, and preaching in crowded churches in each place. The object of his voyage was to assist the Wesleys in the care of an Orphan House which they had established in Georgia for the children of colonists who died there. The management of this Orphan House ultimately devolved entirely on Whitefield, and entailed on him a world of responsibility and anxiety all his life long. Though well meant, it seems to have been a design of very questionable wisdom.\*

Whitefield returned from Georgia after about two years' absence, partly to obtain priest's orders, which were conferred on him by Bishop Benson, and partly on business connected with the Orphan House. And now we reach the era in his life when he was obliged,

\* This Orphan House at Savannah is now in a flourishing condition, and of great usefulness.

by circumstances, to take up a line of conduct as a minister which he probably at one time never contemplated, but which was made absolutely necessary by the treatment he received.

It appears that on arriving in London after his first visit to Georgia, he found the countenances of many of the clergy no longer toward him as they were before. They had taken fright at some expressions in his published letters, and some reports of his conduct in America. They were scandalized at his preaching the doctrine of regeneration in the way that he did, as a thing which many of their parishioners needed. The pulpits of many churches were flatly refused to him. Churchwardens, who had no eyes for heresy and drunkenness, were filled with virtuous indignation about what they called breaches of order. Bishops who could tolerate Arianism and Socinianism, got into a state of excitement about a man who simply preached the Gospel, and put forth warnings against fanaticism and enthusiasm. In short, Whitefield's

field of usefulness within the Church was rapidly narrowed on every side.

The step which seems to have decided Whitefield's course of action at this period of his life, was his adoption of open-air preaching. He had gone to Islington, on a Sunday in April, 1739, to preach for the vicar, his friend, Mr. Stonehouse. In the midst of the prayers, the churchwarden came to him, and demanded his license for preaching in the London diocese. This Whitefield, of course, had not got, any more than any clergyman not regularly officiating in the diocese has at this day. The upshot of the matter was, that being forbidden to preach in the pulpit, he went outside, after the service, and preached in the churchyard. From that day he regularly took up the practice of open-air preaching. Wherever there were large open fields around London; wherever there were large bands of idle, church-despising, Sabbath-breaking people gathered together—there went Whitefield and lifted up his voice. The Gospel so proclaimed was listened to, and greedily received by hundreds

who had never dreamed of visiting a place of worship. In Moorfields, in Hackney Fields, in Mary-le-bone Fields, in May Fair, in Smithfield, on Kennington Common, on Blackheath, Sunday after Sunday, Whitefield preached to admiring masses. Ten thousand, fifteen thousand, twenty thousand, thirty thousand, were computed sometimes to have heard him at once. The cause of pure religion, beyond doubt, was advanced. Souls were plucked from the hand of Satan, as brands from the burning. But it was going much too fast for the Church of those days. The clergy, with very few exceptions, would have nothing to do with this strange preacher. In short, the ministrations of Whitefield in the pulpits of the Establishment, with an occasional exception, from this time ceased. He loved the Church. He gloried in her Articles and Formularies. He used her Prayer Book with delight. But the Church did not love him, and so lost the use of his services. The plain truth is, the Church of England of that day was not ready for a man like Whitefield. The

Church was too much asleep to understand him.

From this date to the day of his death, a period of thirty-one years, Whitefield's life was one uniform employment. From Sunday morning to Saturday night—from the 1st of January to the 31st of December—excepting when laid aside by illness, he was almost incessantly preaching. There was hardly a considerable town in England, Scotland, and Wales, that he did not visit. When churches were opened to him, he gladly preached in churches. When chapels were only offered, he cheerfully preached in chapels. When church and chapel alike were closed, he was ready and willing to preach in the open air. For thirty-four years he labored in this way, always proclaiming the same glorious Gospel, and always, as far as man's eye can judge, with immense effect. In one single Whitsuntide week, after he had been preaching at Moorfields, he received one thousand letters from people under spiritual concern, and admitted to the Lord's table three hundred and fifty

persons. In the thirty-four years of his ministry, it is reckoned that he preached publicly eighteen thousand times.

His *journeyings* were prodigious, when the roads and conveyances of his times are considered. Fourteen times did he visit Scotland. Seven times did he cross the Atlantic, backward and forward. Twice he went over to Ireland. As to England and Wales, he traversed every county in them, from the Isle of Wight to Berwick-on-Tweed, and from the Land's End to the North Foreland.

His *regular ministerial work* in London, when he was not journeying, was prodigious. His weekly engagements at the Tabernacle in Tottenham-court Road, which was built for him when the pulpits of the Established Church were closed, were as follows:—Every Sunday morning he administered the Lord's Supper to several hundred communicants, at half-past six. After this he read prayers, and preached, both morning and afternoon; preached again in the evening at half-past five; and concluded, by addressing a large society of widows, married

people, young men and spinsters, all sitting separately in the area of the Tabernacle, with exhortations suitable to their respective stations. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings, he preached regularly at six. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings, he delivered lectures. This you will observe made thirteen sermons a week. And all this time he was carrying on a correspondence with people in almost every part of the world.

That any human frame could so long endure the labor he went through, does indeed seem wonderful. That his life was not shortened by violence, is no less wonderful. Once he was nearly stoned to death by a Popish mob in Dublin. Once he was nearly murdered in bed by an angry lieutenant of the navy at Plymouth. Once he narrowly escaped being stabbed by the sword of a rakish young gentleman in Moorfields; but he was immortal till his work was done. He died at last at Newburyport, in North America, from a fit of asthma, at the age of fifty-six. His last ser-



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mon was preached only twenty-four hours before his death. It was an open-air discourse two hours long. Like Bishop Jewell, he almost died preaching. He left no children. He was once married, and the marriage does not seem to have contributed much to his happiness. But he left a name far better than that of sons and daughters. Never, I believe, was there a man of whom it could be so truly said, that he spent and was spent for God.

III. The story of *Whitefield's religion* is the next part of the subject that I proposed to take up, and unquestionably it is one of no little interest.

What sort of doctrine did this wonderful man preach? an inquirer may reasonably ask. What were the standards of faith to which he adhered under the Bible? What were the peculiar essentials of this religious teaching of his, which was so universally spoken against in his day?

The answer to all these questions is short

and simple. Whitefield was a real, genuine son of the Church of England. As such he was brought up in early youth. As such he was educated at Oxford. As such he preached as long as he was allowed to preach within the Establishment. As such he preached when he was outside. References to the Prayer Book, Articles, and Homilies, abound in all his writings and sermons. His constant reply to his numerous opponents was, that HE at any rate was consistent with the formularies of his own Church, and that THEY were not. It is not at all too much to say, that when practically cast out of the Establishment, Whitefield was an infinitely better churchman than ten thousand of the men who received the tithes of the Church of England, and remained comfortably behind.

Whitefield no doubt was not a churchman of the stamp of Archbishop Laud and his school. He was not the man to put a Romish interpretation on our excellent Formularies, and to place Church and sacraments before Christ. He was not a churchman of the stamp

of Tillotson and the school that followed him. He did not lay aside justification by faith, and the need of grace, for semi-heathen disquisitions about morality and duty, virtue and vice. And he was quite right. Laud and his followers went infinitely beyond the doctrines of our Church. Tillotson and his school fell infinitely below.

But if a churchman is a man who reads the Articles, and Liturgy, and Homilies, in the sense of the men who compiled them—if a churchman is a man who sympathizes with Cranmer, and Latimer, and Hooper, and Jewell—if a churchman is a man who honors doctrines and ordinances in the order and proportion that the Thirty-nine Articles honor them—if this be the true definition of a churchman, then Whitefield was the highest style of churchman—as true a churchman as ever breathed. And as for Whitefield's adversaries, they were little better than shams and impostors. They had place and power on their side, but they scarcely deserve to be called churchmen at all.

Perhaps no better test of Whitefield's religious opinions can be supplied, than the list of authors in divinity which he wrote out for the use of a college connected with his Orphan House in Georgia. Of churchmen, this list includes the names of Archbishop Leighton, Bishop Hall, and Burkitt; of Puritans, Pool, Owen, and Bunyan; of Dissenters, Matthew Henry and Doddridge; of Scotch Presbyterians, Wilson and Boston. All these are men whose praise is even now in all the churches. These, let us understand, were the kind of men with whom he was of one mind in doctrine.

As to the substance of Whitefield's theological teaching, the simplest account I can give of it is, that it was purely *evangelical*. There were four main things that he never lost sight of in his sermons. These four were: man's complete ruin by sin, and consequent natural corruption of heart; man's complete redemption by Christ, and complete justification before God by faith in Christ; man's need of regeneration by the Spirit, and entire renewal of heart and life; and man's utter want of

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any title to be considered a living Christian, unless he is dead to sin and lives a holy life.

Whitefield had no notion of flattering men, and speaking smooth things to them, merely because they were baptized and called Christians, and sometimes came to church. He only looked at one prominent feature in the thousands he saw around him; and that was, the general character of their lives. He saw the lives of these multitudes were utterly contradictory to the Bible, and utterly at variance with the principles of the Church to which they professed to belong. He waited for nothing more. He looked for no further evidence. He judged of trees by their fruits. He told these thousands at once that they were in danger of being lost forever—that they were in the broad way that leads to destruction—that they were dead, and must be made alive again—that they were lost, and must be found. He told them that if they loved life, they must immediately repent—they must become new creatures—they must be converted, they must

be *born again*. And I believe the apostles would have done just the same.

But Whitefield was just as full and explicit in setting forth the way to heaven as he was in setting forth the way to hell. When he saw that men's consciences were pricked and their fears aroused, he would open the treasure-house of gospel mercy, and spread forth before a congregation its unsearchable stores. He would unfold to them the amazing love of God the Father to a fallen world—that love from which he gave his only-begotten Son, and on account of which, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He would show them the amazing love of God the Son in taking our nature on him, and suffering for us, the just for the unjust. He would tell them of Jesus able to save to the uttermost all that would come to God by him—Jesus and his everlasting righteousness, in which the vilest sinner might stand complete and perfect before the throne of God—Jesus and the blood of sprinkling, which could wash the blackest sins away—Jesus the High-Priest, waiting to receive all

who would come to him, and not only mighty, but ready to save. And all this glorious salvation, he would tell men, was close to them. It was not far above them, like heaven. It was not deep beneath them, like hell. It was near at hand. It was within their reach. He would urge them at once to accept it. The man that felt his sins and desired deliverance had only to believe and be saved, to ask and receive, to wash and be clean. And was he not right to say so? I believe the apostles would have said much the same.

But while Whitefield addressed the careless and ungodly masses in this style, he never failed to urge on those who made a high profession of religion their responsibility, and to stir them up to walk worthy of their high calling. He never tolerated men who talked well about religion, but lived inconsistent lives. Such men, no doubt, there were about him, but it is pretty certain they got no quarter from him. On the contrary, one of his biographers tells us that he was especially careful to impress upon all the members of his con-

gregation the absolute necessity of adorning the doctrine of God in all the relations of life. Masters and servants, rich people and poor, old and young, married and single, each and all were plainly exhorted to glorify God in their respective positions. One day he would tell the young men of his congregation to beware of being like one he heard of, whose uncle described him as such a jumble of religion and business, that he was fit for neither. Another day he would hold up the example of a widow, remarkable for her confidence in God. Another day he would say to them, "God convert you more and more every hour of the day; God convert you from lying in bed in the morning; God convert you from lukewarmness; God convert you from conformity to the world!" Another day he would warn young men against leaving their religion behind them as they rose in the world. "Beware," he would say, "of being golden apprentices, silver journeymen, and copper masters." In short, there never was a greater mistake than to suppose there was any thing Antinomian or



licentious in Whitefield's teaching. It was discriminating, unquestionably. Sinners had their portion; but saints had their portion too. And what was this but walking in the very steps of the apostle Paul?

The crowning excellence of Whitefield's teaching was, that he just spoke of men, things, and doctrines, in the way that the Bible speaks of them, and the place that the Bible assigns to them. God, Christ, and the Spirit—sin, justification, conversion, and sanctification—impenitent sinners the most miserable of people—believing saints the most privileged of people—the world a vain and empty thing—heaven the only rest for an immortal soul—the Devil a tremendous and ever-watchful foe—holiness the only true happiness—hell a real and certain portion for the unconverted; these were the kind of subjects which filled Whitefield's mind, and formed the staple of his ministry. To say that he undervalued the sacraments would be simply false. His weekly communions at the Tabernacle are an answer that speaks for itself. But he never put the

first things in Christianity second, and the second first. He never put doctrines below sacraments, and sacraments above doctrine. And who shall dare to blame him for this? He only followed the proportion of the Bible.

It is only fair to add, that Whitefield exemplified in his practice the religion that he preached. He had faults, unquestionably. I have not come here to make him out a perfect being. He often erred in judgment. He was often hasty, both with his tongue and with his pen. He had no business to say that Archbishop Tillotson knew no more of religion than Mohammed. He was wrong to set down some people as the Lord's enemies, and others as the Lord's friends, so precipitately as he sometimes did. He was to blame for styling many of the clergy letter-learned Pharisees, because they could not receive the doctrine of the new birth. But still, after all this has been said, here can be no doubt that, in the main he was a holy, self-denying, and consistent man. Even his worst enemies can say nothing to the contrary.

He was, to the very end, a man of *eminent self-denial*. His style of living was most simple. He refused money when it was pressed upon him, and once to the amount of seven thousand pounds. He amassed no fortune. He founded no wealthy family. The little money he left behind him at his death was entirely from the legacies of friends.

He was a man of remarkable *disinterestedness* and singleness of eye. He seemed to live for only two objects—the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls. He raised no party of followers who took his name. He established no system, like Wesley, of which his own writings should be cardinal elements. A frequent expression of his is most characteristic of the man: “Let the name of George Whitefield perish, so long as Christ only is exalted.”

Last, but not least, he was a man of *extraordinary catholicity* and liberality in his religion. He knew nothing of that narrow-minded policy which prompts a man to fancy that every thing must be barren outside his own camp,

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and that his party has got a monopoly of truth and heaven. He loved all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. He measured all by the measure which the angels of God use—"did they possess repentance toward God, faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, holiness of conversation?" If they did, they were as his brethren. His soul was with such men, by whatever name they were called. Minor differences were wood, hay, and stubble to him. The marks of the Lord Jesus were the only marks he cared for. This catholicity is the more remarkable, when the spirit of the times he lived in is considered. Even the Erskines, in Scotland, wanted him to preach for no other denomination but their own, viz., the Secession Church. He asked them, why only for them; and received the notable answer, that they were the Lord's people. This was more than Whitefield could stand. He asked if there were no other Lord's people but themselves. He told them, if all others were the Devil's people, they certainly had more need to be preached to. And he wound up by in-

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forming them, that if the Pope himself would lend him his pulpit, he would gladly proclaim the righteousness of Christ in it. To this catholicity of spirit he adhered all his days. And nothing could be a more weighty testimony against all narrowness of spirit among believers, than his request, shortly before his death, that when he did die, John Wesley might be asked to preach his funeral sermon. Wesley and he had long ceased to see eye to eye on Calvinistic points. But as Calvin *said* of Luther, so Whitefield was resolved to *think* of Wesley. He was determined to sink minor differences, and to know him only as a good servant of Jesus Christ.

Such was George Whitefield's religion. Comment, I hope, is needless upon it. Time, at any rate, forbids me to dwell on it a moment longer. But surely I think I have shown enough to justify me in expressing a wish that we had many living ministers in the Church of England like George Whitefield.

IV. The next part of the subject is one

which I feel some difficulty in handling—I allude to *Whitefield's preaching*.

I find that this point is one on which much difference of opinion prevails. I find many are disposed to think that part of Whitefield's success is attributable to the novelty of Gospel doctrines at the times when he preached, and part to the extraordinary gifts of voice and delivery with which he was endowed, and that the matter and style of his sermons were in no wise remarkable. From this opinion I am inclined to dissent altogether. After calm examination, I have come to the conclusion that Whitefield was one of the most powerful and extraordinary preachers the world has ever seen. My belief is, that hitherto he has never been too highly estimated, and that, on the contrary, he does not receive the credit he deserves.

One thing is abundantly clear and beyond dispute, and that is, that his sermons were wonderfully effective. No preacher has ever succeeded in arresting the attention of such enormous crowds of people as those he ad-

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dressed continually in the neighborhood of London. No preacher has ever been so universally popular in every country he visited, England, Scotland, and America, as he was. No preacher has ever retained his hold on his hearers so entirely as he did for thirty-four years. His popularity never waned. It was as great at the end of his days as it was at the beginning. This of itself is a great fact. To command the ear of people for thirty-four long years, and be preaching incessantly the whole time, is something that the novelty of the Gospel alone will not account for. The theory that his preaching was popular, because new, to my mind is utterly unsatisfactory.

Another thing is no less indisputable about his preaching, and that is, that it produced a powerful effect on people in every rank of life. He won the suffrages of high as well as low, of rich as well as poor, of learned as well as unlearned. If his preaching had been popular with none but the uneducated masses, we might have thought it possible there was little in it except a striking delivery and a loud

voice. But facts are, unfortunately, against this theory too; and, under the pressure of these facts, it will be found to break down.

It is a fact, that numbers of the nobility and gentry of Whitefield's day were warm admirers of his preaching. The Marquis of Lothian, the Earl of Leven, the Earl of Buchan, Lord Rae, Lord Dartmouth, Lord James A. Gordon, might be named, among others, besides Lady Huntingdon, and a host of ladies.

It is a fact, that eminent statesmen, like Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, were frequently his delighted hearers. Even the artificial Chesterfield was known to warm under Whitefield's eloquence. Bolingbroke has placed on record his opinion, and said, "He is the most extraordinary man in our times. He has the most commanding eloquence I ever heard in any person."

It is a fact, that cool-headed men, like Hume the historian, and Franklin the philosopher, spoke in no measured terms of his preaching powers. Franklin has written a long account of the effect his sermons produced at Philadel-



phia. Hume declared that it was worth going twenty miles to hear him.

Now these are facts—simple, historical, and well-authenticated facts. What shall we say to them? I say that these facts are quite enough to prove that Whitefield's effectiveness was not owing entirely to delivery and voice, as some men would have us believe. Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, and Hume, and Franklin, were not such weak men as to allow their judgments to be biased by any mere external endowments. They were no mean judges of eloquence. They were, probably, among the best qualified critics of the day. And I say confidently, that their opinion can only be explained by the fact, that Whitefield was indeed a most powerful and extraordinary preacher.

But still, after all, the question remains to be answered, What was the secret of Whitefield's unparalleled success as a preacher? How are we to account for his sermons producing effects which no sermons, before or after his time, have ever yet done? These are questions you have a right to ask. But they are

questions I find it very hard to answer. That his sermons were not mere voice and rant, I think, we have pretty clearly proved. That he was a man of commanding intellect, and grasp of mind, no one has ever pretended to say. How then are we to account for the effectiveness of his preaching?

The reader who turns for a solution of this question to the seventy-five sermons published under his name, will probably be much disappointed. He will not find in them many striking thoughts. He will not discover in them any new exhibitions of Gospel doctrine. The plain truth is, that by far the greater part of them were taken down in short-hand by reporters, without Whitefield's knowledge, and published without correction. No intelligent reader, I think, can help discovering that these reporters were, must unhappily, ignorant alike of stopping and paragraphing, of grammar, and of Gospel. The consequence is, that many passages in these sermons are what Latimer would call a "mingle-mangle," or what we should call in this day "a complete mess."

Nevertheless, I am bold to say, that with all their faults, Whitefield's printed sermons will repay a candid perusal. Let the reader only remember what I have just said, that most of them are miserably reported, paragraphed, and stopped, and make allowance accordingly. Let him remember, also, that English for speaking and English for reading are two different languages; and that sermons which preach well, always read ill. Remember these two things, I say, and I do believe you will find very much to admire in some of Whitefield's sermons. For myself, I can only say, I believe I have learned much from them, and, however great a heresy against taste it may appear, I should be ungrateful if I did not praise them.

And now let me try to point out to you what seem to me to have been the characteristic features of Whitefield's sermons. I may be wrong, but they appear to me to present just such a combination of excellences as is most likely to make an effective preacher.

First and foremost, you must remember, Whitefield preached *a singularly pure Gospel*.

Few men ever gave their hearers so much wheat and so little chaff. He did not get into his pulpit to talk about his party, his cause, his interest, or his office. He was perpetually telling you about your sins, your heart, and Jesus Christ, in the way that the Bible speaks of them. "Oh! the righteousness of Jesus Christ!" he would frequently say: "I must be excused if I mention it in almost all my sermons." This, you may be sure, is the corner-stone of all preaching that God honors. It must be pre-eminently a *manifestation of truth*.

For another thing, Whitefield's preaching was *singularly lucid and simple*. You might not like his doctrine, perhaps; but at any rate you could not fail to understand what he meant. His style was easy, plain, and conversational. He seemed to abhor long and involved sentences. He always saw his mark, and went direct at it. He seldom or never troubled his hearers with long arguments and intricate reasonings. Simple Bible statements, pertinent anecdotes, and apt illustrations, were the more common weapons that he used. The

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consequence was, that his hearers always understood him. He never shot above their heads. Never did man seem to enter so thoroughly into the wisdom of Archbishop Usher's saying, "To make easy things seem hard is easy, but to make hard things easy is the office of a great preacher."

For another thing, Whitefield was a *singularly bold and direct preacher*. He never used that indefinite expression, "we," which seems so peculiar to English pulpit oratory, and which leaves a hearer's mind in a state of misty confusion as to the preacher's meaning. He met men face to face, like one who had a message from God to them—like an ambassador with tidings from heaven; "I have come here to speak to you about your soul." He never minced matters; and beat about the bush in attacking prevailing sins. His great object seemed to be to discover the dangers his hearers were most liable to, and then fire right at their hearts. The result was, that hundreds of his hearers used always to think that the sermons were specially addressed to them.

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selves. He was not content, like many, with sticking on a tailpiece of application at the end of a long discourse. A constant vein of application run through all his sermons. "This is for you: this is for you: and this is for you." His hearers were never let alone. Nothing, however, was more striking than his direct appeals to all classes of his congregation, as he drew toward a conclusion. With all the faults of his printed sermons, the conclusions of some of them are, to my mind, the most stirring and heart-searching addresses to souls that are to be found in the English language.

Another striking feature in Whitefield's preaching was his *thundering earnestness*. One poor, uneducated man said of him, that he "preached like a lion." Never, perhaps, did any preacher so thoroughly succeed in showing people that he, at least, believed in all he was saying, and that his whole heart, and soul, and strength, were bent on making them believe it too. No man could say that his sermons were like the morning and evening gun

at Portsmouth, a formal discharge, fired off as a matter of course, that disturbs nobody. They were all life. They were all fire. There was no getting away from under them. Sleep was next to impossible. You must listen whether you liked it or not. There was a holy violence about him. Your attention was taken by storm. You were fairly carried off your legs by his energy, before you had time to consider what you would do. An American gentleman once went to hear him, for the first time, in consequence of the report he heard of his preaching powers. The day was rainy, the congregation comparatively thin, and the beginning of the sermon rather heavy. Our American friend began to say to himself, "This man is no great wonder after all." He looked round, and saw the congregation as little interested as himself. One old man, in front of the pulpit, had fallen asleep. But all at once Whitefield stopped short. His countenance changed. And then he suddenly broke forth in an altered tone: "If I had come to speak to you in my own name, you might

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well rest you elbows on your knees, and your heads on your hands, and sleep; and once in a while look up and say, What is this babbler talking of? But I have not come to you in my own name. No! I have come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts," (here he brought down his hand and foot with a force that made the building ring,) "and I must and will be heard." The congregation started. The old man woke up at once. "Ay, ay!" cried Whitefield, fixing his eyes on him, "I have waked you up, have I? I meant to do it. I am not come here to preach to stocks and stones: I have come to you in the name of the Lord God of Hosts, and I must and will have an audience." The hearers were stripped of their apathy at once. Every word of the sermon was attended to. And the American gentleman never forgot it.

Another striking feature in Whitefield's preaching was his *singular power of description*. The Arabians have a proverb which says, "He is the best orator who can turn men's ears into eyes." If ever there was a speaker



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who succeeded in doing this, it was Whitefield. He drew such vivid pictures of the things he was dwelling upon, that his hearers could believe they actually saw them all with their own eyes, and heard them with their own ears. "On one occasion," says one of his biographers, "Lord Chesterfield was among his hearers. The preacher, in describing the miserable condition of a poor, benighted sinner, illustrated the subject by describing a blind beggar. The night was dark; the road dangerous and full of snares. The poor sightless mendicant is deserted by his dog near the edge of a precipice, and has nothing to grope his way with but his staff. But Whitefield so warmed with his subject, and unfolded it with such graphic power, that the whole auditory was kept in breathless silence over the movements of the poor old man;" and, at length, when the beggar was about to take that fatal step which would have hurled him down the precipice to certain destruction, Lord Chesterfield actually made a rush forward to save him, exclaiming aloud, "He is gone! he

is gone!" The noble lord had been so entirely carried away by the preacher, that he forgot the whole was a picture.

One more feature in Whitefield's preaching deserves especial notice, and that is, the immense amount of *pathos and feeling* which it always contained. It was no uncommon thing with him to weep profusely in the pulpit. Cornelius Winter goes so far as to say that he hardly ever knew him get through a sermon without tears. There seems to have been nothing whatever of affectation in this. He felt intensely for the souls before him, and his feeling found a vent in tears. Of all the ingredients of his preaching, nothing, I suspect, was so powerful as this. It awakened sympathies, and touched secret springs in men, which no amount of intellect could have moved. It melted down the prejudices which many had conceived against him. They could not hate the man who wept so much over their souls. They were often so affected as to shed floods of tears themselves. "I came to hear you," said one man, "intending to break your head;

but your sermon got the better of me—it broke my heart.” Once become satisfied that a man loves you, and you will listen gladly to any thing he has got to say. And this was just one grand secret of Whitefield’s success.

And now I will only ask you to add to this feeble sketch, that Whitefield’s *action* was perfect—so perfect that Garrick, the famous actor, gave it unqualified praise—that his *voice* was as wonderful as his action—so powerful, that he could make thirty thousand people hear him at once; so musical and well-attuned, that men said he could raise tears by his pronunciation of the word “Mesopotamia:” that his *fluency* and command of extemporaneous language were of the highest order, prompting him always to use the right word and to put it in the right place. Add, I say, these gifts to those already mentioned, and then judge for yourselves whether there is not sufficient, and more than sufficient, in our hands, to account for his power as a preacher.

For my part, I say, unhesitatingly, that I believe no living preacher ever possessed such

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a combination of excellences as Whitefield. Some, no doubt, have surpassed him in some of his gifts; others, perhaps, have been his equals in others. But, for a combination of pure doctrine, simple and lucid style, boldness and directness, earnestness and fervor, descriptiveness and picture-drawing, pathos and feeling—united with a perfect voice, perfect delivery, and perfect command of words, Whitefield, I repeat, stands alone. No man, dead or alive, I believe, ever came alongside of him. And I believe you will always find, that just in proportion as preachers have approached that curious combination of excellences which Whitefield possessed, just in that very proportion have they attained what Clarendon defines true eloquence to be, viz., “a strange power of making themselves believed.”

V. And now, there only remains one more point connected with Whitefield to which I wish to advert. I fear that I shall have exhausted your attention already. But the point is one of such importance, that it can not be

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passed over in silence. The point I mean is, the actual *amount of real good* that Whitefield did.

You will, I hope, understand me, when I say, that the materials for forming an opinion on this point in a history like his, must necessarily be scanty. He founded no denomination among whom his name was embalmed, and his every act recorded, as did John Wesley. He headed no mighty movement against a Church which openly professed false doctrines, as Luther did against Rome. He wrote no books which were to be the religious classics of the million, like John Bunyan. He was a simple, guileless man, who lived for one thing only, and that was to preach Christ. If he succeeded in doing that effectually, he cared for nothing else. He did nothing to preserve the memory of his usefulness. He left his work with the Lord.

Of course, there are many people who can see in Whitefield nothing but a fanatic and enthusiast. There is a generation that loathes every thing like zeal in religion. There are

never wanting men of a cautious, cold-blooded, Erasmus-like temper, who pass through the world doing no good, because they are so dreadfully afraid of doing harm. I do not expect such men to admire Whitefield, or allow he did any good. I fear, if they had lived eighteen hundred years ago, they would have had no sympathy with St. Paul.

Again, there are other people who count schism a far greater crime than either heresy or false doctrine. There is a generation of men who under no circumstances will worship God out of their own parish: and as to separation from the Church, they seem to think that nothing whatever can justify it. I do not, of course, expect such men to admire Whitefield or his work. His principle evidently was, that it was far better for men to be uncanonically saved than canonically damned.

Whether by any other line of action Whitefield could have remained in the Church, and retained his usefulness, is a question which, at this distance of time, we are very incompetent to answer. That he erred in temper and judg-

ment in his dealings with the bishops and clergy, in many instances, I have no doubt. That he raised up fresh bodies of separatists from the Church of England, and made breaches which probably will never be repaired, I have no doubt also. But still it must never be forgotten, that the state of the Church was bad enough to provoke a holy indignation. The old principle is most true, that "he is the schismatic who causes the separation, and not he who separates." *If Whitefield did harm*, the harm ought to be laid on the Church which compelled him to act as he did, quite as much as on him. And when we come to strike the balance, I believe the harm he may have done is outweighed by the good a thousand-fold.

The truth I believe is that the *direct good* Whitefield did to immortal souls was enormous. I will go further. I believe it is incalculable. In Scotland, in England, in America, credible witnesses have recorded their testimony that he was the means of converting thousands of souls.

Franklin, the philosopher, was a cold, cal-

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culating man, and not likely to speak too highly of any minister's work. Yet even he confessed that it "was wonderful to see the change soon made by his preaching in the manners of the inhabitants of Philadelphia. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing religious."

Maclaurin and Willison were Scotch ministers, whose names are well-known to theological readers, and stand deservedly high. Both of them have testified that Whitefield did an amazing work in Scotland. Willison, in particular, says: "That God honored him with surprising success among sinners of all ranks and persuasions."

Old Venn, in our own Church, was a man of strong common sense, as well as great grace. His opinion was, that "if the greatness, extent, success, and disinterestedness of a man's labors can give him distinction among the children of Christ, then we are warranted to affirm, that scarce any has equaled Mr. Whitefield." Again, he says, "It is a well-known fact, that



the conversion of men's souls has been the fruit of a single sermon from his lips, so eminently was he made a fisher of men." And again, "Though we are allowed to sorrow that we shall never see or hear him again, we must still rejoice that millions have heard him so long, so often, and to such good effect; and that out of this mass of people, multitudes are gone before him to hail his entrance into the world of glory."

John Newton was a shrewd man, as well as an eminent minister of the Gospel. His testimony is, "I am not backward to say, that I have not read or heard of any person, since the apostles' days, of whom it may more emphatically be said, he was a burning and a shining light, than the late Mr. Whitefield, whether we consider the warmth of his zeal, the greatness of his ministerial talents, or the extensive usefulness with which the Lord honored him."

These are not solitary testimonies. I might add many more if time permitted. Romaine did not agree with him in many things, yet

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what does he say of him? "We have none left to succeed him; none, of his gifts; none, any thing like him in usefulness." Toplady was a tremendous high Calvinist, and not disposed to over-estimate the number of saved souls. Yet he says, Whitefield's ministry was "attended with spiritual benefit to tens of thousands;" and he styles him "the apostle of the British empire, and the prince of preachers." Hervey was a quiet, literary man, whose health seldom allowed him to quit the retirement of Weston Favell. But he says of Whitefield, "I never beheld so fair a copy of our Lord, such a living image of the Saviour. I can not forbear applying the wise man's encomiums of an illustrious woman to this eminent minister of the everlasting Gospel: 'Many sons have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.'"

But if the amount of direct good that Whitefield did in the world was great, who shall tell us the amount of *good that he did indirectly*? I believe it never can be reckoned up. I suspect it will never be fully known until the last day.

Whitefield was among the first *who stirred up a zeal for the pure Gospel among the clergy and laity of our own Church*. His constant assertion of pure Reformation principles—his repeated references to the Articles, Prayer Book, and Homilies—his never-answered challenges to his opponents to confute him out of the Formularies of their own communion—all this must have produced an effect, and set many thinking. I have no doubt whatever, that many a faithful minister, who became a shining light in those days within the Church of England, first lighted his candle at the lamp of a man outside.

Whitefield, again, was among the first to *show the right way to meet infidels and skeptics*. He saw clearly that the most powerful weapon against such men is not metaphysical reasoning and critical disquisition; but preaching the whole Gospel, living the whole Gospel, and spreading the whole Gospel. It was not the writings of Leland, and the younger Sherlock, and Waterland, and Leslie, that rolled back the flood of infidelity one half so much as the

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preaching of Whitefield, and Wesley, and Fletcher, and Romaine, and Berridge, and Venn. Had it not been for them, I firmly believe we might have had a counterpart of the French Revolution in our own land. They were the men who were the true champions of Christianity. Infidels are seldom shaken by mere abstract reasoning. The surest arguments against them are Gospel truth and Gospel life.

To crown all, Whitefield was the very first who seems thoroughly to have understood what Chalmers has called the *aggressive system*. He did not wait for souls to come to him, but he went after souls. He did not sit tamely by his fireside, mourning over the wickedness of the land. He went forth to beard the Devil in his high places. He attacked sin and wickedness face to face, and gave them no peace. He dived into holes and corners after sinners. He hunted up ignorance and vice wherever it could be found. He showed that he thoroughly realized the nature of the ministerial office. Like a fisherman, he did not wait for the fish

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to come to him. Like a fisherman, he used every kind of means to catch souls. Men know a little more of this now than they did formerly. City Missions, and District Visiting Societies are evidences of clearer views. But let us remember this was all comparatively new in Whitefield's time, and let us give him the credit he deserves.

In short, I come to the conclusion that no man has ever done more good in his day and generation than the man who is the subject of this lecture. He was a true hero, and that in its highest and best sense. He did a work that will stand the fire, and glorify God, when many other works are forgotten. And for that work I believe that England owes a debt to his character which England has never yet paid.

And now, I hasten to a conclusion. I have set before you, to the best of my ability, Whitefield's time, and life, and religion, and preaching, and actual work. I have not extenuated his faults, to the best of my knowledge. I have not exaggerated his good qualities, so

far as I am aware. It only remains for me to point out to you two great practical lessons which the subject appears to me to teach.

Learn then, I beseech you, for one lesson, the *amazing power that one single man possesses*, when he is determined to work for God, and has got truth on his side.

Here is a man who starts in life with every thing, to all appearance, against him. He has neither family, nor place, nor money, nor high connections on his side. His views are flatly opposed to the customs and prejudices of his time. He stands in direct opposition to the stream of public taste, and the religion of the vast bulk of ministers around him. He is as much isolated and alone, to all appearances, as Martin Luther opposing the Pope, as Athanasius resisting the Arians, as Paul on Mars' Hill. And yet this man stands his ground. He arrests public attention. He gathers crowds around him who receive his teaching. He is made a blessing to tens of thousands. He turns the world upside down. How striking these facts are!

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Here is your *encouragement*, if you stand alone. You have no reason to be cast down and faint-hearted. You are not weak, though few, if God is with you. There is nothing too great to be done by a little company, if only they have Christ on their side. Away with the idea that numbers alone have power! Cast away the old vulgar error that majorities alone have strength. Get firm hold of the great truth that minorities always move the world. Think of the little flock that our Lord left behind him, and the one hundred and twenty names in that upper chamber in Jerusalem, who went forth to assault the heathen world! Think of George Whitefield assailing boldly the ungodliness which deluged all around him, and winning victory after victory! Think of all this. Cast fear away. Lay out your talents heartily and confidently for God.

Here, also, is your *example*, if you desire to do good to souls. Whether you become ministers, or missionaries, or teachers, never forget you must fight with Whitefield's weapons, if you wish to have any portion of Whitefield's

success. Never forget what John Wesley said was Whitefield's theology—"Give God all the glory of whatever is good in man: set Christ as high and man as low as possible, in the business of salvation. All merit is in the blood of Christ, and all power is from the Spirit of Christ."

Think not for a moment that earnestness alone will insure success. This is a huge delusion. It will do nothing of the kind. All the earnestness in the world will never enable a teacher of *German theology* to show you one Tinnevelly, or a teacher of *semi-Popery* one Sierra Leone. Oh, no! it must be the simple, pure, unadulterated Gospel that you must carry with you, if you are to do good. You must sow as Whitefield sowed, or you will never reap as he reaped.

Learn, in the last place, *what abundant reasons we have for thankfulness in the present condition of the Church of England.*

We are far too apt to look at the gloomy side of things around us, and at that only. We are all prone to dwell on the faults of our con



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dition, and to forget to bless God for our mercies. There are many things we could wish otherwise in our beloved Church, beyond all question. There are defects we could wish to see remedied, and wounds we should gladly see healed. But still, let us look behind us, and compare the Church of our day with the Church of Whitefield's times. Look on this picture, and on that, and I am sure, if you do so honestly and fairly, you will agree with me that we have reason to be thankful.

We have *bishops* on the bench now, who love the simple truth as it is in Jesus, and are ready to help forward good works—bishops who are not ashamed to come forward in Exeter Hall, and lend their aid to the extension of Christ's Gospel—bishops who would have welcomed a man like Whitefield, and found full occupation for his marvelous gifts. Let us thank God for this. It was not so a hundred years ago.

We have hundreds of *clergymen* in our parishes now, who preach as full a Gospel as Whitefield did, though they may not do it

with the same power—clergymen who are not ashamed of the doctrine of regeneration, and do not pronounce a minister a heretic, because he says to ungodly people, “Ye must be born again.” Let us thank God for this. A man need not travel many miles now in order to find parishes where the Gospel is preached. When driven out of one parish church he can find truth in another. It was not so a hundred years ago.

We have thousands of *laymen* now, who are fully alive to the duties and responsibilities of members of a Protestant Church—laymen who rejoice in holding up the hands of evangelical ministers, and are righteously jealous for the maintenance and extension of evangelical truth. Let us thank God for this. It was not so a hundred years ago.

We have *societies and agencies* for evangelizing every dark corner of the earth in connection with our Church. We have wide and effectual doors of usefulness for all who are willing to labor in the Lord’s vineyard. The difficulty now is, not so much to find openings

for doing good, as to find men. Let us thank God for this. It was not so a hundred years ago.

Young men of the Church of England, I ask you to gather up these facts, and treasure them in your memories. They are facts. They can not be gainsayed. Treasure them up, I repeat. Look back a century, and then look around you; and then judge for yourselves whether you ought not to be thankful.

Beware, I beseech you, of that tribe of men who would fain persuade you to forsake the Church of England, and separate from her communion. There is a generation of murmurers and complainers in the present day, who seem to revel in picking holes—a generation that seems to forget that fault-finding is the easiest task in all the world—a generation that has no eyes to see the healthy parts in our body ecclesiastic, but has a wonderfully quick and morbid scent for detecting its sores—a generation that is mighty to scatter, but impotent to build—a generation that would persuade churchmen to strain at gnats, but finds

no difficulty itself in swallowing camels—a generation that would have you pull the old house down, but can not offer you so much as a tent in its place: of all such men I say solemnly and affectionately—of all such men I warn you to beware. Listen not to them. Have no friendship with them. Avoid them. Turn from them. Pass away.

Let us not leave the good old ship, the CHURCH OF ENGLAND, until we have some better reason than can at present be seen. What though she be old and weather-beaten! What though, in some respects, she may want repair! What though some of the crew be not to be depended on! Still, with all her faults, the old ship is in far better trim than she was a century ago. Let us acknowledge her faults, and hope they may yet be amended. But still, with all her faults, let us stick by the ship!

When the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England are repealed, and the Prayer Book and Homilies so altered as to be unprotestantized—when regeneration and justification by

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faith are forbidden to be preached in her pulpits—when the Queen, Lords and Commons, and laity, have assented to these changes—in short, when the Gospel is driven out of the Establishment—then, and not till then, it will be time for you and me to go out; but, till then, I say, **LET US STICK BY THE CHURCH!**



IV.

Twelve Hints to Young Men.





## IV.

### Twelve Hints to Young Men.

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#### I.—OUGHT NOT A YOUNG MAN TO THINK ?

CERTAINLY a young man ought to think. Till I can persuade you to do that, I have done nothing. The very first request I make to every reader of this address is this, that he will give his heart the benefit of a little quiet thinking.

Want of thought is one simple reason why thousands of souls are cast away forever. Men will not consider,—will not look forward,—will not look round them,—will not reflect on the end of their present course, and the sure consequences of their present ways,—and awake at last to find they are damned for want of thinking.

Young men, none are in more danger of this

than yourselves. Recklessness and thoughtlessness are your greatest snares. You hate the trouble of sober, quiet thinking, and so you form wrong decisions, and run your heads into sorrow. Young Esau must needs have his brother's pottage, and sells his birthright:—he never *thought* how much he should one day want it. Young Simeon and Levi must needs avenge their sister Dinah, and slay the Shechemites:—they never *considered* how much trouble and anxiety they might bring on their father Jacob and his house. It is one of God's solemn charges against the Jews in Isaiah's time, "My people doth not consider." (Isaiah i. 3.)

Believe me, this world is not a world in which we can do well without thinking, and least of all do well in the matter of our souls. "Don't think," whispers Satan: he knows that an unconverted heart is like a dishonest tradesman's books, it will not bear close inspection. "Consider your ways," says the word of God,—stop and think,—consider and be wise. Well says the Spanish proverb, "Hurry comes of

the devil." Just as men marry in haste, and then repent at leisure, so they make mistakes about their souls in a minute, and then suffer for it for years. Just as a bad servant does wrong, and then says, "I never gave it a thought," so young men run into sin, and then say, "I did not think about it,—it did not look like sin." Not look like sin! What would you have? Sin will not come to you, saying "I am sin:" it would do little harm if it did. Sin always seems "good, and pleasant, and desirable," at the time of commission. Oh! get wisdom, get discretion. Remember the words of Solomon: "Ponder the paths of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." (Prov. iv. 26.) It is a wise saying of Lord Bacon, "Do nothing rashly. Stay a little, that you may make an end the sooner."

Some, I dare say, will object that I am asking what is unreasonable; that youth is not the time of life when people ought to be grave and thoughtful. I answer, there is little danger of their being too much so in the present day. Foolish talking, and jesting, and jok-

ing, and excessive merriment, are only too common.

Doubtless there is a time for all things; but to be always light and trifling is anything but wise. What says the wisest of men?—"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." (Eccles. vii. 2, 3, 8.) Matthew Henry tells a story of a great statesman\* in Queen Elizabeth's time, who retired from public life in his latter days, and gave himself up to serious thought. His former gay companions came to visit him, and told him he was becoming melancholy: "No," he replied, "I am *serious*; for all are serious round about me. God is serious in observing us,—Christ is serious in interceding for us,—the Spirit is serious in striving with us—the truths of God are serious,—our spirit-

\* Secretary Walsingham.

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ual enemies are serious in their endeavors to ruin us,—poor lost sinners are serious in hell,—and why then should not you and I be serious too?”

Oh! young men, learn to be thoughtful. Learn to consider what you are doing, and whither you are going. Make time for calm reflection. Commune with your own heart, and be still. Do not be lost merely for want of thought.

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## II.—WHAT ARE YOUR PROSPECTS?

A WISE man will always look forward. To think of nothing but time present is the part of a fool. There are two things to which the young should look forward, as well as the old, and these two are *death and judgment*.

Young men, it is appointed unto you once to die; and however strong and healthy you may be now, the day of your death is perhaps very near. I see young people sick as well as old. I bury youthful corpses as well as aged. I read the names of persons no older than

yourselves in every churchyard. I learn from books that, excepting infancy and old age, more die between thirteen and twenty-three, than at any other season of life. And yet you often live as if you were sure at present not to die at all.

Are you thinking you will mind these things *to-morrow*? Remember the words of Solomon: "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Prov. xxvii. 1.) "Serious things to-morrow," said a heathen\* to one who warned him of coming danger; but his to-morrow never came. To-morrow is the devil's day, but to-day is God's. Satan cares not how spiritual your intentions may be, and how holy your resolutions, if only they are fixed for *to-morrow*. Oh! give not place to the devil in this matter; answer him, "No! Satan, it shall be to-day, to-day." All men do not live to be Patriarchs, like Isaac and Jacob. Many children die before their fathers. David had to mourn the death of his two finest sons.

\* Archias the Theban.

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Job lost all his ten children in one day. Your lot may be like one of theirs, and when death summons, it will be vain to talk of to-morrow, —you must go at once.

Are you thinking you will have a *convenient season* to mind these things by and by? So thought Felix and the Athenians, to whom Paul preached; but it never came. Hell is paved with such fancies. Better make sure work while you can. Leave nothing unsettled that is eternal. Run no risks when your soul is at stake. Believe me the salvation of a soul is no easy matter. All need a "great salvation," whether young or old,—all need to be born again,—all need to be washed in Christ's blood,—all need to be sanctified by the Spirit. Happy is that man who does not leave these things uncertain, but never rests till he has the witness of the Spirit within him, that he is a child of God.

Young men, your time is short. Your days are but a span long—a shadow—a vapor—a tale that is soon told. Your bodies are not brass. "Even the young men," says

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Isaiah, "shall utterly fall." (Isaiah xl. 30.) Your health may be taken from you in a moment:—it only needs a fall, a fever, an inflammation, a broken blood-vessel,—and the worm would soon feed upon you. There is but a step between any one of you and death. This night your soul might be required of you. You are fast going the way of all the earth,—you will soon be gone. Your life is all uncertainty,—your death and judgment are perfectly sure. You too must hear the Archangel's trumpet, and go forth to stand before the great white throne,—you too must obey that summons, which Jerome says was always ringing in his ears, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment!" "Surely I come quickly," is the language of the Judge himself. I cannot, dare not, will not let you alone.

Oh! that you would all lay to heart the words of the Preacher: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things



God will bring thee into judgment." (Eccles. xi. 9.) Wonderful that, with such a prospect, any man can be careless and unconcerned! Surely none are so mad as those who are content to live unprepared to die. Surely the unbelief of men is the most amazing thing in the world. Well may the clearest prophecy in the Bible begin with these words, "Who hath believed our report?" (Isaiah liii. 1.) Well may the Lord Jesus say, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8.) Young men, I fear lest this be the report of many of you in the courts above, "They will not believe." I fear lest you be hurried out of the world, and awake to find out too late, that death and judgment are realities.



### III.—HAVE YOU NOT SOMETHING TO LOSE ?

YOU have something belonging to you of priceless value. You have a soul. Of all the things that God has given you, this is the most

important,—and it is a solemn thought that a young man may “lose his own soul.”

Your soul is eternal. It will live forever. The world, and all that it contains, shall pass away,—firm, solid, beautiful, well-ordered as it is,—the world shall come to an end: “The earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” (2 Peter iii. 10.) The works of statesmen, writers, painters, architects, are all short-lived: your soul will outlive them all. The angel’s voice shall proclaim one day, that “Time shall be no longer.” (Rev. x. 6.)—But that shall never be said of your souls.

Try, I beseech you, to realize the fact that your soul is the one thing worth living for. It is the part of you which ought always to be first considered. No place, no employment is good for you, which injures your soul. No friend, no companion deserves your confidence who makes light of your soul’s concerns. The man who hurts your person, your property, your character, does you but temporary harm. He is the true enemy who contrives to damage your soul.

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Think for a moment what you were sent into the world for. Not merely to eat and drink, and indulge the desires of the flesh,—not merely to dress out your body, and follow its lusts whithersoever they may lead you,—not merely to work, and sleep, and laugh, and talk, and enjoy yourselves, and think of nothing but time. No! you were meant for something higher and better than this. You were placed here to train for eternity. Your body was only intended to be a house for your immortal spirit. It is flying in the face of God's purposes to do as many do,—to make the soul a servant to the body, and not the body a servant to the soul.\*

Young men, God is no respecter of persons. He regards no man's coat, or purse, or rank, or position. He sees not with man's eyes. The poorest saint that ever died in a work-house, is nobler in His sight than the richest sinner that ever died in a palace. God does

\* The Assembly's Larger Catechism begins with this admirable question and answer:—"What is the chief and highest end of man?" "To glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever."

not look at riches, titles, learning, beauty, or anything of the kind. One thing only God does look at, and that is the immortal soul. He measures all men by one standard, one measure, one test, one criterion, and that is *the state of their souls*.

Do not forget this. Keep in view morning, noon, and night, the interests of your soul. Rise up each day desiring that it may prosper, —lie down each evening, inquiring of yourself whether it has really got on. Remember Zeuxis, the great painter of old. When men asked him why he labored so intensely, and took such extreme pains with every picture, his simple answer was, "I paint for eternity." Do not be ashamed to be like him. Set your immortal soul before your mind's eye, and when men ask you why you live as you do, answer them in his spirit, "I live for my soul." Believe me, the day is fast coming, when the soul will be the one thing men will think of, and the only question of importance will be this, "*Is my soul lost or saved?*"

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**IV.—IT CAN BE DONE.**

It is possible to be a young man, and yet to serve God. Religion was not meant for parsons and old women only, as some say. It was meant for young as well as old. Remember that.

I fear the snares that Satan lays for you on this point. I fear lest he succeed in filling your minds with the vain notion, that to be a true Christian in youth is impossible. I have seen many carried away by this delusion. I have heard it said, "You are requiring impossibilities, in expecting so much religion from young people. Youth is no time for seriousness. Our desires are strong, and it was never intended that we should keep them under, as you wish us to do. God meant us to enjoy ourselves. There will be time enough for religion by and bye." And this kind of talk is only too much encouraged by the world. The world is only too ready to wink at youthful sins. The world appears to think it a matter of course, that young men must "sow their

wild oats." The world seems to take it for granted, young people *must* be irreligious, and that it is not possible for them to follow Christ.

Young men, I will ask you this simple question,—Where will you find anything of all this in the Word of God? Where is the chapter or verse in the Bible which will support this talking and reasoning of the world? Does not the Bible speak to old and young alike, without distinction? Is not sin, sin, whether committed at the age of twenty or fifty? Will it form the slightest excuse, in the day of judgment, to say, "I know I sinned, but then I was young?" Show your common sense, I beg of you, by giving up such vain excuses. You are responsible and accountable to God from the very moment that you know right and wrong.

I know well there are many difficulties in a young man's way.—I allow it fully. But there are always difficulties in the way of doing right. The path to heaven is always narrow, whether we be young or old.—

There are difficulties,—But God will give

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you grace to overcome them. God is no hard master. He will not, like Pharaoh, require you to make bricks without straw. He will take care the path of plain duty is never impossible. He never laid command on man, which He would not give man power to perform.

There are difficulties,—but many a young man has overcome them hitherto, and so may you. Moses was a young man of like passions with yourselves;—but see what is said of him in Scripture, “By faith Moses, when he was come to age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” (Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26.) Daniel was a young man when he began to serve God in Babylon. He was surrounded by temptations of every kind. He had few with him, and many against him. Yet Daniel’s life was so blameless and consistent, that

even his enemies could find no fault in him, except "concerning the law of his God." (Dan. vi. 5.) And these are not solitary cases. There is a cloud of witnesses whom I could name. Time would fail me, if I were to tell you of young Isaac, young Joseph, young Joshua, young Samuel, young David, young Solomon, young Abijah, young Obadiah, young Josiah, young Timothy. These were not angels, but men, with hearts naturally like your own. They too had obstacles to contend with, lusts to mortify, trials to endure, hard places to fill, like any of yourselves. But young as they were, they all found it possible to serve God. Will they not all rise in judgment and condemn you, if you persist in saying it cannot be done?

Young men, *try* to serve God. Resist the devil, when he whispers it is impossible. Try, —and the Lord God of the promises will give you strength in the trying. He loves to meet those who struggle to come to Him, and He will meet you and give you the power that you feel you need. Be like the man, whom



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Bunyan's Pilgrim saw in the interpreter's house,—go forward boldly, saying, "Set down my name." Those words of our Lord are true, though I often hear them repeated by heartless and unfeeling tongues, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. vii. 7.) Difficulties which seemed like mountains shall melt away like snow in spring. Obstacles which seemed like giants in the mist of distance, shall dwindle into nothing when you fairly face them. The lion in the way which you fear, shall prove to be chained. If men believed the promises more, they would never be afraid of duties. But remember that little word I press upon you, and when Satan says, "you cannot be a Christian while you are young," answer him, "Get thee behind me, Satan, by God's help *I will try.*"

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#### V.—WHO IS AFRAID?

MANY, I suspect, are afraid if the truth were known. Beware, I say to every young man

who reads this address, beware of being influenced by the fear of man.

“The fear of man does indeed bring a snare.” (Prov. xxix. 25.) It is terrible to observe the power which it has over most minds, and especially over the minds of the young. Few seem to have any opinions of their own, or to think for themselves. Like dead fish, they go with the stream and tide; what others think right, they think right; and what others call wrong, they call wrong too. There are not many original thinkers in the world. Most men are like sheep,—they follow a leader. If it was the fashion of the day to be Romanists, they would be Romanists,—if to be Mahometans, they would be Mahometans. They dread the idea of going against the current of the times. In a word, the opinion of the day becomes their religion, their creed, their Bible, and their God.

The thought, “What will my friends say or think of me,” nips many a good inclination in the bud. The fear of being observed upon, laughed at, ridiculed, prevents many a good

habit being taken up. There are Bibles that would be read this very day, if the owners dared. They know they ought to read them, but they are afraid:—"What will people say?" There are knees that would be bent in prayer this very night, but the fear of man forbids it:—"What would my wife, my brother, my friend, my companion say, if they saw me praying?" Alas! what wretched slavery this is, and yet how common! "I feared the people," said Saul to Samuel: and so he transgressed the commandment of the Lord. (1 Sam. xv. 24.) "I am afraid of the Jews," said Zedekiah, the graceless king of Judah: and so he disobeyed the advice which Jeremiah gave him. (Jerem. xxxviii. 19.) Herod was afraid of what his guests would think of him: so he did that which made him "exceeding sorry,"—he beheaded John the Baptist. Pilate feared offending the Jews: so he did that which he knew in his conscience was unjust,—he delivered up Jesus to be crucified. If this be not slavery, what is?

Young men, I want you all to be free from this

bondage. I want you each to care nothing for man's opinion, when the path of duty is clear. Believe me, it is a great thing to be able to say "No!" Here was good king Jehoshaphat's weak point,—he was too easy and yielding in his dealings with Ahab, and hence many of his troubles. (1 Kings xxii. 4.) Learn to say "No!" Let not the fear of not seeming good-natured make you unable to do it. When sinners entice you, be able to say decidedly, I will "not consent." (Prov. i. 10.)

Consider only how *unreasonable* this fear of man is. How shortlived is man's enmity, and how little harm can he do you! "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be as grass: and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth." (Isaiah li. 12, 13.) And how *thankless* is this fear! None will really think better of you for it. The world always respects those most who act boldly for God. Oh! break these bonds, and cast these chains from you. Never be ashamed of

letting men see you want to go to heaven. Think it no disgrace to show yourself a servant of God. Never be afraid of doing what is right.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. x. 28.) Only try to please God, and He can soon make others pleased with you. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." (Prov. xvi. 7.)

Young men, be of good courage,—care not for what the world says or thinks: you will not be with the world always. Can man save your soul?—No. Will man be your judge in the great and dreadful day of account?—No. Can man give you a good conscience in life,—a good hope in death,—a good answer in the morning of the resurrection?—No, no, no. Man can do nothing of the sort. Then, "fear not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them

up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool." (Isaiah li. 7, 8.) Call to mind the saying of good Colonel Gardiner: "I fear God, and therefore I have none else to fear." Go, and be like him.

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#### VI.—DOES PLEASURE PAY?

PLEASURE does not pay most certainly. And yet how few think so! How many fancy nothing is so delightful as to take their pleasure! Take heed, I cry, to every reader of this address, take heed and beware of the love of pleasure.

Youth is the time when our passions are strongest; and like unruly children, cry most loudly for indulgence. Youth is the time when we have generally most health and strength: death seems far away, and to enjoy ourselves in this life at first sight seems every thing. Youth is the time when most people have few earthly cares or anxieties to take up their attention. And all these things help to

make young men think of nothing so much as pleasure. "I serve lusts and pleasures," that is the true answer many a young man should give, if asked, "Whose servant are you?"

Young men, time would fail me, if I were to tell you all the fruits this love of pleasure produces, and all the ways in which it may do you harm. Why should I speak of revelling, feasting, drinking, gambling, theatre-going, dancing, and the like? Few are to be found who do not know something of these things by bitter experience. And these are only instances. All things that give a feeling of excitement for the time,—all things that drown thought, and keep the mind in a constant whirl,—all things that please the senses, and gratify the flesh,—these are the sort of things that have mighty power at your time of life, and they owe their power to the love of pleasure. Be on your guard. Be not like those of whom Paul speaks, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." (2 Tim. iii. 4.)

Remember what I say, if you will cleave to

- earthly pleasures,—these are the things which *murder souls*. There is no surer way to get a seared conscience and a hard impenitent heart, than to give way to the desires of the flesh and mind. It seems nothing at the time, but it tells in the long run.

Consider what Peter says: “Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” (1 Peter ii. 11.) They destroy the soul’s peace, break down its strength, lead it into hard captivity, make it a slave.

Consider what Paul says: “Mortify your members which are upon earth.” (Coloss. iii. 5.) “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.” (Galat. v. 23.) “I keep under my body and bring it into subjection.” (1 Cor. ix. 27.) Once the body was a perfect mansion for the soul:—now it is all corrupt and disordered, and needs constant watching. It is a burden to the soul,—not a help-meet; a hindrance,—not an assistance. It may become a useful servant, but it is always a bad master.

Consider again the words of Paul: “Put ye



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on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Rom. xiii. 14.) "These," says Leighton, "are the words, the very reading of which so wrought with Augustus, that from a licentious young man, he turned a faithful servant of Jesus Christ." Young men, I wish this might be the case with all you.

Remember again, if you will cleave to earthly pleasures, they are all *unsatisfying, empty, and vain*. Like the locusts of the vision in Revelation, they seem to have crowns on their heads: but like the same locusts, you will find they have stings—real stings—in their tails. All is not gold that glitters. All is not good that tastes sweet. All is not real pleasure that pleases for a time.

Go and take your fill of earthly pleasures if you will,—you will never find your heart satisfied with them. There will always be a voice within, crying lik the horse-leech in the Proverbs, "Give, give." There is an empty place there, which nothing but God can fill. You will find, as Solomon did by experience, that

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earthly pleasures are but a vain show,—vanity and vexation of spirit,—whited sepulchres, fair to look at without, full of ashes and corruption within. Better be wise in time. Better write “poison” on all earthly pleasure. The most lawful of them must be used with moderation. All of them are soul-destroying, if you give them your heart.\*

And here I will not shrink from warning all young men to remember the seventh commandment;—to beware of adultery and fornication, of all impurity of every kind. I fear there is often a want of plain speaking on this part of God’s law. But when I see how Prophets and Apostles have dealt with this subject,—when I observe the open way in which the Reformers of our own church denounce it,—when I see the number of young men who walk in the footsteps of Reuben, and Hophni, and Phinehas, and Amnon,—I for one cannot, with a good conscience, hold my peace. I

\* “Pleasure,” says Adams on 2 Peter, “must first have the *warrant*, that it be without sin;—then the *measure*, that it be without excess.”

doubt whether the world is any better for the excessive silence which prevails about this commandment. For my own part, I feel it would be false and unscriptural delicacy, in addressing young men, not to speak of that which is pre-eminently "*the young man's sin.*"

The breach of the seventh commandment is the sin above all others, that, as Hosea says, "Takes away the heart." (Hos. iv. 11.) It is the sin that leaves deeper scars upon the soul than any sin that a man can commit. It is a sin that slays its thousands in every age, and has overthrown not a few of the saints of God in time past. Lot, and Samson, and David are fearful proofs. It is the sin that man dares to smile at, and smooths over under the names of *gaiety, unsteadiness, wildness, and irregularity.* But it is the sin that the devil peculiarly rejoices over, for he is the "unclean spirit;" and it is the sin that God peculiarly abhors, and declares He "will judge." (Heb. xiii. 4.)

Young men, "flee fornication," (1 Cor. vi. 8,) if you love life. "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things

cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." (Ephes. v. 6.) Flee the *occasions* of it,—the company of those who might draw you into it,—the places where you might be tempted to it. Read what our Lord says about it in Matthew v. 28. Be like holy Job: "Make a covenant with your eyes." (Job xxxi. 1.) Flee *talking* of it. It is one of the things that ought not so much as to be named. You cannot handle pitch, and not be defiled. Flee the *thoughts* of it; resist them, mortify them, pray against them,—make any sacrifice rather than give way. Imagination is the hotbed where this sin is too often hatched. Guard your thoughts, and there is little fear about your deeds.

Consider the caution I have been giving. If you forget all else, do not let this be forgotten.

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#### VII.—NO GAINS WITHOUT PAINS.

MEN know that well in worldly matters. It is known in banks. It is known in merchants'

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offices. It is known in shops. It is known in the Temple, and Lincoln's Inn. I wish every young man to remember this in the matters of his soul. If your soul is to prosper, you must be diligent in the use of public means of grace.

Be regular in going to the house of God, whenever it is open for prayer and preaching, and it is in your power to attend. Be regular in keeping the Lord's day holy, and determine that God's day out of the seven, shall henceforth always be given to its rightful owner.

I would not leave any false impression on your minds. Do not suppose I mean that keeping your church made up the whole of religion. I tell you no such thing. I have no wish to see you grow up formalists, and Pharisees. If you think the mere carrying your body to a certain house, at certain times, on a certain day in the week, will make you a Christian, and prepare you to meet God, I tell you flatly you are miserably deceived. All services without heart-service are just unprofitable and vain. They only are true worship-

pers who “worship God in spirit and in truth: the Father seeketh such to worship Him.” (John iv. 23.)

But means of grace are not to be despised because they are not saviours. Gold is not food,—you cannot eat it,—but you would not therefore say it was useless, and throw it away. Your soul’s eternal well-doing most certainly does not depend on means of grace, but it is no less certain that without them, as a general rule, your soul will not do well. God *might* take all who are saved to heaven in a chariot of fire, as He did Elijah, but He does not do so. He *might* teach them all by visions, and dreams, and miraculous interpositions, without requiring them to read or think for themselves, but He does not do so. And why not?—Because He is a God that works by means, and it is His law and will that in all man’s dealings with Him means shall be used. None but a fool or enthusiast would think of building a house without ladders and scaffolding, and just so no wise man will despise means.

I will dwell the more on this point, because

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Satan will try hard to fill your minds with arguments against means. He will draw your attention to the numbers of persons who use them and are no better for the using. "See there," he will whisper, "do you not observe those who go to church are no better than those who stay away?" But do not let this move you. It is never fair to argue against a thing because it is improperly used. It does not follow that means of grace can do no good, because many attend on them and get no good from them.

I dwell on this point too, because of the strong anxiety I feel that every young man should regularly hear the preaching of Christ's Gospel. I cannot tell you how important I think this is. By God's blessing the ministry of the Gospel might be the means of converting your soul,—of leading you to a saving knowledge of Christ,—of making you a child of God in deed and in truth. This would be cause for eternal thankfulness indeed. This would be an event over which angels would rejoice. But even if this were not the case,

there is a *restraining* power and influence in the ministry of the Gospel, under which I earnestly desire every young man to be brought. There are thousands whom it keeps back from evil, though it has not yet turned them unto God ;—it has made them far better members of society, though it has not yet made them true Christians. There is a certain kind of sanctifying power in the faithful preaching of the Gospel, which tells insensibly on multitudes, who listen to it without receiving it into their hearts. To hear sin cried down and holiness cried up,—to hear Christ exalted, and the works of the devil denounced,—to hear the kingdom of heaven and its blessedness described, and the world and its emptiness exposed, to hear this week after week, Sunday after Sunday, is seldom without good effect to the soul. It makes it far harder afterwards to run into any excess of riot and profligacy. It acts as a wholesome check upon a man's heart. This, I believe, is one way in which that promise of God is made good ; “ My word shall not return unto me void.” (Isaiah lv. 11.) There



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is much truth in that strong saying of Whitefield: "The Gospel keeps many a one from the gaol and gallows, if it does not keep him from hell."

Let me here name another point which is closely connected with this subject. Let nothing ever tempt you to become a Sabbath-breaker. I press this on your attention. Make conscience of giving all your Sabbath to God. A spirit of disregard for this holy day is growing up amongst us with fearful rapidity, and not least among young men. Sunday travelling by railways and steam-boats, Sunday visiting, Sunday excursions, are becoming every year more common than they were, and are doing infinite harm to souls.

Young men, be jealous on this point. Whether you live in town or country, take up a decided line; resolve not to profane your Sabbath. Let not the plausible arguments of "needful relaxation for your body,"—let not the example of all around you,—let not the invitation of companions with whom you may be thrown,—let none of these things move you to

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depart from this settled rule, that *God's day shall be given to God.*

Once give over caring for the Sabbath, and in the end you will give over caring for your soul. The steps which lead to this conclusion are easy and regular. Begin with not honoring God's day, and you will soon not honor God's house;—cease to honor God's house, and you will soon cease to honor God's book;—cease to honor God's book, and by and bye you will give God no honor at all. Let a man lay the foundation of having *no Sabbath*, and I am never surprised if he finishes with the topstone of *no God*. It is a remarkable saying of Judge Hale, "Of all the persons who were convicted of capital crimes while he was upon the bench, he found only a few who would not confess, on inquiry, that they began their career of wickedness by a neglect of the Sabbath."

Young men, you may be thrown among companions who forget the honor of the Lord's day; but resolve, by God's help, that you will always remember it to keep it holy. Honor it by a regular attendance at some place where

the Gospel is preached. Settle down under a faithful ministry, and once settled let your place in church never be empty.

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VIII.—THE SOUL'S POISON.

IF I saw a man drinking slow poison, would I not try to stop him? Undoubtedly I would. But there is no poison so bad as sin, and there is nothing I wish a young man to understand so thoroughly as the evil of sin.

Young men, if you did but know what sin is, and what sin has done, you would not think it strange that I exhort you as I do. You do not see it in its true colors. Your eyes are naturally blind to its guilt and danger, and hence you cannot understand what makes me so anxious about you. Oh! let not the devil succeed in persuading you that sin is a small matter.

Think for a moment *what the Bible says about sin*;—how it dwells naturally in the heart of every man and woman alive, (Eccles. vii. 20.

Rom. 23)—how it defiles our thoughts, words, and actions, and that continually, (Gen. vi. 5. Matt. xv. 19)—how it renders us all guilty and abominable in the sight of a holy God. (Isaiah lxiv. 6. Habak. i. 13)—how it leaves us utterly without hope of salvation, if we look to ourselves, (Psalm cxliii. 20)—how its fruit in this world is shame, and its wages in the world to come death, (Rom. vi. 21, 23.) Think calmly of all this. I tell you this day, it is not more sad to be dying of consumption, and not to know it, than it is to be a living man, and not know sin.

Think *what an awful change sin has worked* on all our natures. Man is no longer what he was, when God formed him out of the dust of the ground. He came out of God's hand upright and sinless. (Eccles. vii. 29.) In the day of his creation he was like everything else, "very good." (Gen. i. 31.) And what is man now? A fallen creature, a ruin, a being that shows the marks of corruption all over,—his heart like Nebuchadnezzar, degraded and earthly, looking down and not up,—his affec-

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tions like a household in disorder, calling no man master, all extravagance and confusion,—his understanding like a lamp flickering in the socket, impotent to guide him, not knowing good from evil, his will like a rudderless ship, tossed to and fro by every desire, and constant only in choosing any way rather than God's. Alas! what a wreck is man, compared to what he might have been. Well may we understand such figures being used, as blindness, deafness, disease, sleep, death, when the Spirit has to give us a picture of man as he is. And man as he is, remember, was so made by sin.

Think too, *what it has cost to make atonement for sin*, and to provide a pardon and forgiveness for sinners. God's own Son must come into the world, and take upon Him our nature, in order to pay the price of our redemption, and deliver us from the curse of a broken law. He, who was in the beginning with the Father, and by whom all things were made, must suffer for sin, the just for the unjust,—must die the death of a malefactor, before the way to heaven can be laid open to any soul. See the

Lord Jesus Christ despised and rejected of men, scourged, mocked, and insulted;—behold Him bleeding on the cross of Calvary;—hear Him crying in agony, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”—mark how the sun was darkened, and the rocks rent at the sight; and then consider, young men, what must be the evil and guilt of sin.

Think, also, *what sin has done* already upon earth. Think how it cast Adam and Eve out of Eden,—brought the flood upon the old world,—caused fire to come down on Sodom and Gomorrah,—drowned Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,—destroyed the seven wicked nations of Canaan,—scattered the twelve tribes of Israel over the face of the globe. Sin alone did all this.

Think, moreover, of all the *misery and sorrow that sin has caused*, and is causing at this very day. Pain, disease, and death,—strifes, quarrels, and divisions,—envy, jealousy, and malice,—deceit, fraud, and cheating,—violence, oppression, and robbery,—selfishness, unkindness, and ingratitude,—all these are the fruits

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of sin. Sin is the parent of them all. Sin it is that has so marred and spoiled the face of God's creation.

Young men, consider these things, and you will not wonder that we preach as we do. Surely if you did but think of them, you would break with sin forever. Will you play with poison? Will you sport with hell? Will you take fire into your hands? Will you harbor your deadliest enemy in your bosom? Will you go on living as if it mattered nothing whether your own sins were forgiven or not,—whether sin had dominion over you, or you over sin? Oh! awake to a sense of sin's sinfulness and danger. Remember the words of Solomon, "Fools," none but fools, "make a mock at sin." (Prov. xiv. 9.)

Hear then the request that I make you this day, pray that God would teach you the real evil of sin. As ever you would have your soul saved, arise and pray.

**IX.—THE SOUL'S REMEDY.**

IF I had discovered a certain remedy in the time of the cholera, I should have thought it a public duty to make it known. But I know a remedy for the worst disease in the world, even for sin, and I want all young men to know it too. I wish all young men to become acquainted with Jesus Christ.

This is, indeed, the principal thing in religion. This is the corner-stone of Christianity. Till you know this, my warnings and advice will be useless, and your endeavors, whatever they may be, will be vain. A watch without a main-spring is not more unserviceable than is a religion without Christ.

But let me not be misunderstood. It is not the mere knowing Christ's name that I mean,—it is the knowing His mercy, grace, and power,—the knowing Him, not by the hearing of the ear, but by the experience of your hearts. I want you to know Him by faith,—I want you, as Paul says, to know “the power of His resurrection; being made conformable unto



His death." (Phil. iii. 10.) I want you to be able to say of Him, He is my peace and my strength, my life and my consolation, my Physician, and my Shepherd, my Saviour and my God.

Why do I make such a point of this? I do it because in Christ alone "all fulness dwells," (Colos. i. 19)—because in Him alone there is a full supply of all that we require for the necessities of our souls. Of ourselves we are all poor empty creatures,—empty of righteousness and peace,—empty of strength and comfort,—empty of courage and patience,—empty of power to stand, or go on, or make progress in this evil world. It is in Christ alone that all these things are to be found,—grace, peace, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. It is just in proportion as we live upon Him, that we are strong Christians. It is only when self is nothing, and Christ is all in our confidence, it is then only that we shall do great exploits. Then only are we armed for the battle of life, and shall overcome. Then only are we prepared for the journey of life, and shall get forward. To live on Christ,

to draw all from Christ, to do all in the strength of Christ, to be ever looking unto Christ,—this is the true secret of spiritual prosperity. “I can do all things,” says Paul, “through Christ, which strengtheneth me.” (Phil. iv. 13.)

Young men, I set before you Jesus Christ this day as the *treasury of your soul*; and I invite you to begin by going to Him, if you would so run as to obtain. Let this be your first step,—go to Christ. Do you want to consult friends?—He is the best friend, “A friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” (Prov. xviii. 24.) Do you feel unworthy because of your sins? Fear not: His blood cleanseth from all sin,—He says, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isaiah i. 18.) Do you feel weak, and unable to follow Him? Fear not: He will give you power to become sons of God,—He will give you the Holy Ghost to dwell in you, and seal you for His own,—a new heart will He give you, and a new Spirit will He put within you. Are you troubled or beset

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with peculiar infirmities? Fear not: there is no evil spirit that Jesus cannot cast out,—there is no disease of soul that He cannot heal. Do you feel doubts and fears? Cast them aside: “Come unto me,” He says: “Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.” He knows well the heart of a young man. He knows your trials and your temptations, your difficulties and your foes. In the days of His flesh he was like yourselves,—a young man at Nazareth. He knows by experience, a young man’s mind. He can be touched with the feelings of your infirmities,—for He suffered Himself, being tempted. Surely you will be without excuse, if you turn away from such a Saviour and Friend as this.

Hear the request I make of you this day,—if you love life, seek to become acquainted with Jesus Christ.

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X.—THE SAFETY-LAMP.

I SHOULD not like any one that I loved to go down into a coal-mine without a safety-

lamp. And I would fain persuade all young men who read this address, to use a safety-lamp in this dark and dangerous world. There is one ready for all who will use it. That safety-lamp is the Bible.

The Bible is God's merciful provision for sinful man's soul,—the map by which he must steer his course, if he would attain eternal life. All that we need to know, in order to make us peaceful, holy, or happy, is there richly contained. If a young man would know how to begin life well, let him hear what David says: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." (Psalm cxix. 9.)

Young men, I charge you to make a habit of reading the Bible, and not to let the habit be broken. Let not the laughter of companions,—let not the bad customs of the family you may live in,—let none of these things prevent your doing it. Determine that you will not only *have* a Bible, but also make time to *read* it too. Suffer no man to persuade you that it is only a book for Sunday-school chil-

dren, and old women. It is the book from which king David got wisdom and understanding. It is the book which young Timothy knew from his childhood. Never be ashamed of reading it. Do not "despise the word." (Prov. xiii. 13.)

Read it *with prayer* for the Spirit's grace, to make you understand it. Bishop Beveridge says well, "A man may as soon read the letter of Scripture without eyes, as understand the Spirit of it without grace."

Read it *reverently*, as the word of God, not of man,—believing implicitly that what it approves is right, and what it condemns is wrong. Be very sure that every *doctrine* which will not stand the test of Scripture, is false. This will keep you from being tossed to and fro, and carried about by the dangerous opinions of these latter days. Be very sure that every *practice* in your life which is contrary to Scripture, is sinful, and must be given up. This will settle many a question of conscience, and cut the knot of many a doubt. Remember how differently two kings of Judah read the

word of God.—Jehoiakim read it, and at once cut the writing to pieces, and burned it on the fire. (Jer. xxxvi. 23.) And why?—Because his heart rebelled against it, and he was resolved not to obey. Josiah read it, and at once rent his clothes, and cried mightily unto the Lord. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 19.) And why?—Because his heart was tender and obedient. He was ready to do anything which Scripture showed him was his duty. Oh! that you may follow the last of these two, and not the first.

And *read it regularly*. This is the only way to become “mighty in the Scriptures.” A hasty glance at the Bible now and then does little good. At that rate you will never become familiar with its treasures, or feel the sword of the Spirit fitted to your hand in the hour of conflict. But get your mind stored with Scripture, by diligent reading, and you will soon discover its value and power. Texts will rise up in your hearts in the moment of temptation. Commands will suggest themselves in seasons of doubt. Promises will come across your thoughts in the time of dis-

couragement. And thus you will experience the truth of David's words, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm cxix. 11); and of Solomon's words, "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee." (Prov. vi. 22.)

I dwell on these things more because this is an age of reading. Of making many books there seems no end, though few of them are really profitable. There seems a rage for cheap printing and publishing. Newspapers of every sort abound, and the tone of some, which have the widest circulation, tells badly for the taste of the age. Amidst the flood of dangerous reading, I plead for my Master's Book,—I call upon you not to forget the book of the soul. Let not newspapers, novels, and romances be read, while the Prophets and Apostles lie despised. Let not the exciting and licentious swallow up your attention, while the edifying and sanctifying can find no place in your mind.

Young men, give the Bible the honor due to it, every day you live. Whatever you read, read that first. And beware of bad books:—there are plenty in this day. Take heed what you read. I suspect there is more harm done to souls in this way than most people have an idea is possible. Value all books in proportion as they are agreeable to Scripture. Those that are nearest to it are the best, and those that are farthest from it, and most contrary to it, the worst.\*

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#### XI.—LOSE NOTHING FOR WANT OF ASKING.

MEN seldom lose anything for want of asking here on earth, although they often ask and get nothing. I invite young men to

\* I observe a remarkable passage in the first leading article of the "*Times*" newspaper, of August 20th, 1847, "We question if any person of any class or school, ever read the Scriptures regularly and thoroughly, without being, or becoming, not only religious, but sensible and consistent." This is not a quotation, but an editorial opinion. It is, at any rate, a striking admission from the greatest organ of public opinion in the civilized world. Let us be thankful for it.



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remember this in the matter of their souls. I invite them to ask of Him who giveth to all liberally. I invite them, wherever they are, to pray.

Prayer is the life-breath of a man's soul. Without it we may have a name to live, and be counted Christians; but we are dead in the sight of God. The feeling that we must cry to God for mercy and peace is a mark of grace, and the habit of spreading before Him our soul's wants is an evidence that we have the spirit of adoption. And prayer is the appointed way to obtain the relief of our spiritual necessities,—it opens the treasury, and sets the fountain flowing,—and if we have not, it is because we ask not.

Prayer is the way to procure the outpouring of the Spirit upon our hearts. Jesus has promised the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. He is ready to come down with all his precious gifts, renewing, sanctifying, purifying, strengthening, cheering, encouraging, enlightening, teaching, directing, guiding into all truth. But then He waits to be entreated.

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And here it is, I say it with sorrow, here it is, that men fall short so miserably. Few indeed are to be found who pray,—many who go down on their knees, and say a form perhaps,—but few who pray;—few who cry unto God,—few who call upon the Lord,—few who seek as if they wanted to find,—few who knock as if they hungered and thirsted,—few who wrestle,—few who strive with God earnestly for an answer,—few who give Him no rest,—few who continue in prayer,—few who watch unto prayer,—few who pray always without ceasing, and faint not. Yes! few pray. It is just one of the things assumed as a matter of course, but seldom practised; a thing which is everybody's business, but in fact hardly anybody performs.

Young men, believe me, if your soul is to be saved you must pray. God has no dumb children. If you are to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil, you must pray:—it is vain to look for strength in the hour of trial, if it has not been sought for. You may be thrown with those who never do it,—you may have to

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sleep in the same room with some one who never asks anything of God,—still, mark my words, you must pray.

I can quite believe you find great difficulties about it,—difficulties about opportunities, and seasons, and places. I dare not lay down too positive rules on such points as these. I leave them to your own conscience. You must be guided by circumstances. Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed on a mountain; Isaac prayed in the fields; Hezekiah turned his face to the wall as he lay upon his bed; Daniel prayed by a river side; Peter, the Apostle, on the house-top. I have heard of young men praying in stables and hay-lofts. All that I contend for is this, you must know what it is to “enter into your closet.” (Matt. vi. 6.) There must be stated times when you must speak with God face to face,—you must every day have your seasons for prayer. *You must pray.*

Without this all advice and counsel is useless. This is that piece of spiritual armor, which Paul names last in his catalogue, in Ephesians vi., but it is in truth first in value

and importance. This is that meat which you must daily eat, if you would travel safely through the wilderness of this life. It is only in the strength of this that you will get onward towards the mount of God. I have heard it said that the needle-grinders of Sheffield sometimes wear a magnetic mouth-piece at their work, which catches all the fine dust that flies around them, prevents it entering their lungs, and so saves their lives. Prayer is the mouth-piece that you must wear continually, or else you will never work on uninjured by the unhealthy atmosphere of this sinful world.

*You must pray.*

Young men, be sure no time is so well spent as that which a man spends upon his knees. Make time for this, whatever your employment may be. Think of David, king of all Israel: what does he say?—"Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice." (Psalm lv. 17.) Think of Daniel. He had all the business of a kingdom on his hands;—yet he prayed three times a day. See there the secret of his safety

in wicked Babylon. Think of Solomon. He begins his reign with prayer for help and assistance, and hence his wonderful prosperity. Think of Nehemiah. He could find time to pray to the God of heaven, even when standing in the presence of his master, Artaxerxes. Think of the example these godly men have left you, and go and do likewise.

Oh! that the Lord may give you all the Spirit of grace and supplications. "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto God, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" (Jer. ii. 4.) Gladly would I consent that all this address should be forgotten, if only this doctrine of the importance of prayer might be impressed on your hearts.

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## XII.—WHO IS YOUR FRIEND?

I WISH I knew what kind of a friend each reader of this address has got. If I did I should know more than I do now about his soul. But I can give him a piece of advice,

and that is to be very particular in the choice of his friends.

Understand me,—I do not speak of *acquaintances*. I do not mean that you ought to have nothing to do with any but true Christians. To take such a line is neither possible nor desirable in this world. Christianity requires no man to be uncourteous.

But I do advise you to be very careful in your choice of *friends*. Do not open all your heart to a man, merely because he is clever, agreeable, good-natured, high-spirited, and kind. These things are all very well in their way, but they are not everything. Never be satisfied with the friendship of any one who will not be useful to your soul.

Believe me, the importance of this advice cannot be overrated. There is no telling the harm that is done by associating with godless companions and friends. The devil has few better helps in ruining a man's soul. Grant him this help, and he cares little for all the armor with which you may be armed against him. Good education, early habits of moral

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ity, sermons, books, regular homes, letters of parents, all, he knows well, will avail you little, if only you will cling to ungodly friends. You may resist many open temptations, refuse many plain snares, but once take up a bad companion, and he is content. That awful chapter which describes Ammon's wicked conduct about Tamar, almost begins with these words, "But Ammon had a friend,—a very subtle man." (2 Sam. xiii. 3.)

You must recollect, we are all creatures of imitation: precept may teach us, but it is example that draws us. There is that in us all, that we are always disposed to catch the ways of those with whom we live; and the more we like them, the stronger does the disposition grow. Without our being aware of it, they influence our tastes and opinions;—we gradually give up what they dislike, and take up what they like, in order to become more close friends with them. And worst of all, we catch their ways in things that are wrong, far quicker than in things that are right. Health, unhappily, is not contagious, but disease is. It is

far more easy to catch a chill, than to impart a glow, and to make each other's religion dwindle away, than grow and prosper.

Young men, I ask you to lay these things to heart. Before you let any one become your constant companion,—before you get into the habit of telling him everything,—and going to him in all your troubles, and all your pleasures; before you do this, just think of what I have been saying; ask yourself, “Will this be a useful friendship to me or not?”

“Evil communications” do indeed “corrupt good manners.” (1 Cor. xv. 33.) I wish that text were written in hearts, as often as it is in copy books. Good friends are among our greatest blessings;—they may keep us back from much evil, quicken us in our course, speak a word in season, draw us upward, and draw us on. But a bad friend is a positive misfortune, a weight continually dragging us down, and chaining us to earth. Keep company with an irreligious man, and it is more than probable you will in the end become like him. That is the general consequence of all



such friendships. The good go down to the bad, and the bad do not come up to the good. Even a stone will give way before a continual dropping. The world's proverb is only too correct, "Clothes and company tell true tales about character." "Show me who a man lives with," say the Spaniards, "and I will show you what he is."

I dwell the more upon this point, because it has more to do with your prospects in life, than at first sight appears. If ever you marry, it is more than probable you will choose a wife among the connections of your friends. If Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram had not formed a friendship with Ahab's family, he would most likely not have married Ahab's daughter. And who can estimate the importance of a right choice in marriage? It is a step which, according to the old saying, "either makes a man or mars him." Your happiness in both lives may depend on it. Your wife must either help your soul, or harm it: there is no medium. She will either fan the flame of religion in your heart, or throw cold water upon it, and

make it burn low. She will either be wings or fetters, a rein or a spur to your Christianity, according to her character. He that findeth a good wife, doth indeed "find a good thing;" but if you have the least wish to find one, be very careful how you choose your friends.

Do you ask me what kind of friends you shall choose? Choose friends who will benefit your soul,—friends whom you can really respect,—friends whom you would like to have near you on your death-bed,—friends who love the Bible, and are not afraid to speak to you about it,—friends such as you will not be ashamed of owning at the coming of Christ, and the day of judgment. Follow the example that David sets you; he says, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." (Psalm cxix. 63.) Remember the words of Solomon: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." (Prov. xiii. 20.) But depend on it, bad company in the life that now is, is the sure way to procure worse company in the life to come.

V.

“Be Zealous.”



## V.

### “Be Zealous.”

“It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.”—GALATIANS, IV. 18.

READER,

There is a subject before your eyes of vast importance. I mean the subject of religious zeal.

It is a subject like many others in religion, most sadly misunderstood. Many would be ashamed to be thought “zealous.” Many are ready to say of zealous people what Festus said of Paul, “They are beside themselves—they are mad.” Acts, xxvi. 24.

But it is a subject which no reader of the Bible has any right to pass over. If we make the Bible our rule of faith and practice, we can not turn away from it. We must look it

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in the face. What says the Apostle Paul to Titus? "Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, *zealous* of good works." Titus, ii. 14. What says the Lord Jesus to the Laodicean church? "Be *zealous* and repent." Rev. iii. 19.

Reader, I say plainly, I want to plead the cause of zeal in religion. I am not afraid of it. I love it. I admire it. I believe it to be a mighty blessing. I want to strike a blow at the lazy, easy, sleepy Christianity of these latter days, which can see no beauty in zeal, and only uses the word "zealot" as a word of reproach. I want to remind Christians that "Zealot" was a name given by our Lord to His Apostle Simon as a mark of honor, and to persuade them to be zealous men.

Come now and give me your attention, while I tell you something about zeal. Listen to me for your own sake—for the sake of the world—for the sake of the Church of Christ. Listen to me, and by God's help I will show you that to be zealous is to be wise.

I. Let me show you, in the first place, *what is zeal in religion.*

II. Let me show you, in the second place, *when a man can be called rightly zealous in religion.*

III. Let me show you, in the third place, *why it is a good thing for a man to be zealous in religion.*

I. First of all, I propose to bring before you this question, “What is *zeal* in religion?”

Zeal in religion is a burning desire to please God, to do His will, and to advance His glory in the world in every possible way. It is a desire which no man feels by nature—which the Spirit puts in the heart of every believer when he is converted—but which some believers feel so much more strongly than others, that they alone deserve to be called zealous men.

This desire is so strong, when it really reigns in a man, that it impels him to make any sacrifice—to go through any trouble—to deny himself to any amount—to suffer, to work, to labor, to toil—to spend himself and

be spent, and even to die—if only he can please God and honor Christ.

A zealous man in religion is pre-eminently *a man of one thing*. It is not enough to say that he is earnest—hearty—uncompromising—thorough-going—whole-hearted—fervent in spirit. He only sees one thing—he cares for one thing—he lives for one thing—he is swallowed up in one thing, and that one thing is to please God. Whether he lives, or whether he dies—whether he has health, or whether he has sickness—whether he is rich, or whether he is poor—whether he pleases man or whether he gives offense—whether he is thought wise, or whether he is thought foolish—whether he gets blame, or whether he gets praise—whether he gets honor, or whether he gets shame—for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing; and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory. If he is consumed in the very burning, he cares not for it—he is content. He feels like a lamp, he is made to burn, and if consumed in burning, he has but done the work for which God ap-



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pointed him. Such an one will always find a sphere for his zeal. If he can not preach, and work, and give money, he will cry, and sigh, and pray. Yes! if he is only a pauper, on a perpetual bed of sickness, he will make the wheels of sin around him drive heavily, by continually interceding against it. If he can not fight in the valley with Joshua, he will do the work of Moses, Aaron and Hur, on the hill. If he is cut off from working himself, he will give the Lord no rest till help is raised up from another quarter, and the work is done. This is what I mean, when I speak of zeal in religion.

You know the habit of mind that makes men great in this world—that makes such men as Alexander the Great, or Julius Cæsar, or Oliver Cromwell, or Peter the Great, or Charles XII., or Marlborough, or Napoleon, or Pitt. You know that they were all men of one thing. They threw themselves into one grand pursuit. They cared for nothing else. They put every thing else aside. They counted every thing else as second rate, and of subordinate importance,

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compared to the one thing that they put before their eyes every day they lived. I say that the same habit of mind applied to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, becomes religious *zeal*.

You know the habit of mind which makes men great in the sciences of this world—that makes such men as Archimedes, or Sir Isaac Newton, or Galileo, or Ferguson the astronomer, or James Watt. All these were men of one thing. They brought the powers of their minds into one single focus. They cared for nothing else beside. And this was the secret of their success. I say that this same habit consecrated to the service of God, becomes religious *zeal*.

You know the habit of mind that makes men rich—that makes men amass mighty fortunes, and leave millions behind them. What kind of people were the bankers, and merchants, and tradesmen, who have left a name behind them, as men who acquired immense wealth, and became rich from being poor? They were all men that threw themselves entirely into their business, and neglected every

thing else for the sake of that business. They gave their first attention, their first thoughts, the best of their time, and the best part of their mind, to pushing forward the transactions in which they were engaged. They were men of one thing. Their hearts were not divided. They devoted themselves, body, soul, and mind to their business. They seemed to live for nothing else. I say that, if you turn that habit of mind to the service of God and his Christ, it makes religious zeal.

Now, reader, this habit of mind—this zeal was *the characteristic of all the Apostles*. See for example the Apostle Paul. Hear him when he speaks to the Ephesian elders for the last time, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." Acts xx. 24. Hear him again, when he writes to the Philippians, "This one thing I do; I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. iii. 13.

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See him from the day of his conversion, giving up his brilliant prospects—forsaking all for Christ's sake—and going forth to preach that very Jesus whom he had once despised. See him going to and fro throughout the world from that time—through persecution—through oppression—through opposition—through prisons—through bonds—through afflictions—through things next to death itself, up to the very day when he sealed his faith with his blood, and died at Rome, a martyr for that Gospel which he had so long proclaimed. This was true religious *zeal*.

This again was *the characteristic of the early Christians*. They were men "every where spoken against." They were driven to worship God in dens and caves of the earth. They often lost every thing in the world for their religion's sake. They generally gained nothing but the cross, persecution, shame, and reproach. But they seldom, very seldom, went back. If they could not dispute, at least they could suffer. If they could not convince their adversaries by argument, at any rate they

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could die, and prove that they themselves were in earnest. Look at Ignatius cheerfully traveling to the place where he was to be devoured by lions, and saying as he went, "Now do I begin to be a disciple of my Master, Christ." Hear old Polycarp before the Roman Governor, saying boldly when called upon to deny Christ, "Four score and six years have I served Christ, neither hath he ever offended me in any thing, and how then can I revile my King?" This was true *zeal*.

This, again, was *the characteristic of Martin Luther*. He boldly defied the most powerful hierarchy that the world has ever seen. He unvailed its corruptions with an unflinching hand. He preached the long-neglected truth of justification by faith, in spite of anathemas and excommunications fast and thickly poured upon him. See him going to the Diet at Worms, and pleading his cause before the Emperor, and the Legate, and a host of the children of this world. Hear him saying—when men were dissuading him from going, and reminding him of the fate of John Huss,

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"Though there were a devil under every tile on the roofs of Worms, in the name of the Lord I shall go forward." This was true *zeal*.

This again, was *the characteristic of our own English Reformers*. You have it in our first reformer, Wickliffe, when he rose up on his sick bed, and said to the Friars who wanted him to retract all he had said against the Pope, "I shall not die, but live to declare the villanies of the Friars." You have it in Cranmer, dying at the stake, rather than deny Christ's Gospel, holding forth that hand to be first burned, which, in a moment of weakness, had signed a recantation, and saying, as he held it in the flames, "This unworthy hand!" You have it in old father Latimer, standing boldly on his faggot, at the age of seventy years, and saying to Ridley, "Courage, brother Ridley! we shall light such a candle this day, as, by God's grace, shall never be put out." This was *zeal*.

This, again, has been *the characteristic of all the greatest Missionaries*. You see it in Mrs. Judson, in Carey, in Morrison, in Schwartz, in

Williams, in Brainerd, in Elliott. You see it in none more brightly than in Henry Martyn. This was a man who had reached the highest academical honors that Cambridge could bestow. Whatever profession he chose to follow, he had the most dazzling prospects of success. He turned his back upon it all. He chose to preach the Gospel to poor benighted heathen. He went forth to an early grave, in a foreign land. He said, when he got there, and saw the condition of the people, "I could bear to be torn in pieces, if I could but hear the sobs of penitence—if I could but see the eyes of faith directed to the Redeemer!" This was *zeal*.

But, reader, to look away from all earthly example—this, remember, is pre-eminently the characteristic of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ Himself. Of Him it was written hundreds of years before he came upon earth, that He was "clad with *zeal* as with a cloak," and "the *zeal* of thine house hath even eaten me." And His own words were "My meat is to do my Father's will, and to finish his

work." Psalm lxvi. 9. Isaiah lix. 17. John iv. 34.

Where shall we begin if we try to give examples of his zeal? Where should we end if we once began? Trace all the narratives of His life in the four Gospels. Read all the history of what He was from the beginning of His ministry to the end. Surely if there ever was one who was *all zeal*, it was our great Example—our Head—our High-Priest—the great Shepherd of our profession, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader, if these things are so, you should not only beware of running down zeal, but you should also beware of allowing zeal to be run down in your presence. It may be badly directed, and then it becomes a curse;—but it may be turned to the highest and best ends, and then it is a mighty blessing. Like fire, it is one of the best of servants;—but, like fire, also, if not well directed, it may be the worst of masters. Listen not to those people who talk of zeal as weakness and enthusiasm. Listen not to those who see no beauty in missions



—who laugh at all attempts at the conversion of souls—who call Societies for sending the Gospel to the world useless—and who look upon City Missions, and District Visiting, and Ragged Schools, and Open Air Preaching, as nothing but foolishness and fanaticism. Beware, lest in joining a cry of that kind, you condemn the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Beware lest you speak against Him who has “left us an ensample that we should follow His steps.”

Alas! I fear there are many professing Christians, who, if they had lived in the days when our Lord and His apostles walked upon earth, would have called Him and all His followers, enthusiasts and fanatics. There are many, I fear, who have more in common with Annas and Caiaphas—with Pilate and Herod—with Festus and Agrippa—with Felix and Gallio—than with St. Paul, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. I pass on now to the second thing I proposed to speak of. *When is a man truly zealous in religion?*

There never was a grace of which Satan has not made a counterfeit. There never was a good coin issued from the mint, but forgers at once have coined something very like it. It was one of Nero's cruel practices, first to sew up Christians in the skins of wild beasts, and then bait them with dogs. It is one of Satan's devices to place distorted copies of the believer's graces before the eyes of men, and so to bring the true graces into contempt. No grace has suffered so much in this way as zeal. Of none perhaps are there so many shams and counterfeits abroad. We must, therefore, clear the ground of all rubbish on this question. We must find out when zeal in religion is really good, and true, and of God.

1. Reader, if zeal be true, it will be a *zeal according to knowledge*. It must not be a blind, ignorant zeal. It must be a calm, reasonable, intelligent principle, which can show the warrant of Scripture for every step it takes. The unconverted Jews had zeal. Paul says, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, *but not according to knowledge.*" Rom. x. 21.

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Saul had zeal when he was a persecuting Pharisee. He says himself, in one of his addresses to the Jews, "I was *zealous* toward God as ye all are this day." Acts, xxii. 31. Manasseh had zeal in the days when he was an idolater. The man who made his own children pass through the fire—who gave up the fruit of his body to Moloch, to atone for the sin of his soul—that man had zeal. James and John had zeal when they would have called down fire on a Samaritan village. But our Lord rebuked them. Peter had zeal when he drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus. But he was quite wrong. Bonner and Gardiner had zeal when they burned Latimer and Cranmer. Were they not in earnest? Let us do them justice. They were zealous, though it was for an unscriptural religion. The members of the Inquisition in Spain had zeal, when they tortured men, and put them to horrible deaths, because they would not forsake the Gospel. Yes! they marched men and women to the stake in solemn procession, and called it "An Act of Faith," and believed they were

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doing God service. The Hindoos, who used to lie down before the car of Juggernaut, and allow their bodies to be crushed under its wheels:—had not they zeal? The Indian widows, who used to burn themselves on the funeral pile of their deceased husbands—the Roman Catholics, who persecuted to death the Vaudois and Albigenses, and cast down men and women from rocks and precipices, because they were heretics;—had not they zeal? The Saracens—the Crusaders—the Jesuits—the anabaptists of Munster—the followers of Joanna Southcote—had they not all zeal? Yes! Yes! I do not deny it. They were all in earnest. But their zeal was not such zeal as God approves—it was not a “zeal according to knowledge.”

2. Furthermore if zeal be true, it will be a zeal *from true motives*. Such is the subtlety of the heart, that men will often do right things from wrong motives. Amaziah and Joash, kings of Judah, are striking proofs of this. Just so a man may have zeal about things that are good and right, but from second-

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rate motives, and not from a desire to please God. And such zeal is worth nothing. It is reprobate silver. It is utterly wanting when placed in the balance of God. Man looks only at the action. God looks at the motive. Man only thinks of the quantity of work done. God considers the doer's heart.

There is such a thing as zeal from *party spirit*. It is quite possible for a man to be unwearied in promoting the interests of his own Church or denomination, and yet to have no grace in his own heart—to be ready to die for the peculiar opinions of his own section of Christians, and yet to have no real love to Christ. Such was the zeal of the Pharisees. They "compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he was made, they made him twofold more the child of hell than themselves." Matt. xxiii. 15. This zeal is not true.

There is such a thing as zeal from mere *selfishness*. There are times when it is men's interest to be zealous in religion. Power and patronage are sometimes given to godly men.

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The good things of the world are sometimes to be attained by wearing a cloak of religion. And whenever this is the case, there is no lack of false zeal. Such was the zeal of Joab, when he served David. Such was the zeal of only too many Englishmen in the days of the Commonwealth, when the Puritans were in power.

There is such a thing as zeal from the *love of praise*. Such was the zeal of Jehu, when he was putting down the worship of Baal. Remember how he met Jonadab the son of Rechab, and said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord." Such is the zeal that Bunyan refers to in *Pilgrim's Progress*, when he speaks of some who went "for praise" to Mount Zion. Some people feed on the praise of their fellow creatures. They would rather have it from Christians than have none at all.

Ah! reader, it is a sad and humbling proof of man's corruption, that there is no degree of self-denial and self-sacrifice to which men may not go from false motives. It does not follow that a man's religion is true, because he

"gives his body to be burned," or because he "gives his goods to feed the poor." The Apostle Paul tells us that a man may do this, and yet not have true charity. It does not follow because men go into a wilderness, and become hermits, that therefore they know what true self-denial is. It does not follow because people immure themselves in monasteries and nunneries, or become sisters of charity, and sisters of mercy, that therefore they know what true crucifixion of the flesh and self-sacrifice is in the sight of God. All these things people may do on wrong principles. They may do them from wrong motives—to satisfy a secret pride and love of notoriety—but not from the true motive of zeal for the glory of God. All such zeal, let us understand, is false. It is of earth, and not of heaven.

3. Furthermore, if zeal be true, it will be a *zeal about things according to God's mind, and sanctioned by plain examples in God's Word.* Take, for one instance, that highest and best kind of zeal—I mean zeal for our own growth in personal holiness. Such zeal will make a

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man feel incessantly that sin is the mightiest of all evils, and conformity to Christ the greatest of all blessings. It will make him feel that there is nothing which ought not to be done, in order to keep up a close walk with God. It will make him willing to cut off the right hand, or pluck out the right eye, or make any sacrifice, if only he can attain a closer communion with Jesus. Is not this just what you see in the Apostle Paul? He says, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." "I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark." 1 Cor. ix. 27; Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Take, for another instance, zeal for the salvation of souls. Such zeal will make a man burn with desire to enlighten the darkness which covers the souls of multitudes, and to bring every man, woman, and child he sees,



to the knowledge of the Gospel. Is not this what you see in the Lord Jesus? It is said that He neither gave Himself, nor His disciples, leisure so much as to eat. Mark, vi. 31. Is not this what you see in the Apostle Paul? He says, “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” 1 Cor. ix. 22.

Take, for another instance, zeal against evil practices. Such zeal will make a man hate every thing which God hates, and long to sweep it from the face of the earth. It will make him jealous of God’s honor and glory, and look on every thing which robs him of it as an offense. Is not this what you see in Phinehas, the son of Eleazar?—or in Hezekiah and Josiah, when they put down idolatry?

Take, for another instance, zeal for maintaining the doctrines of the Gospel. Such zeal will make a man hate unscriptural teaching, just as he hates sin. It will make him regard religious error as a pestilence which must be checked, whatever may be the cost. It will make him scrupulously carefully about

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every jot and tittle of the counsel of God, lest by some omission the whole Gospel should be spoiled. Is not this what you see in Paul at Antioch, when he withstood Peter to the face, and says he was to be blamed? Gal. ii. 11. These are the kind of things about which true zeal is employed. Such zeal, let us understand, is honorable before God.

4. Furthermore, if zeal be true, it will be a zeal *tempered with charity and love*. It will not be a bitter zeal. It will not be a fierce enmity against persons. It will not be a zeal ready to take the sword, and to smite with carnal weapons. The weapons of true zeal are not carnal, but spiritual. True zeal will hate sin, and yet love the sinner. True zeal will hate heresy, and yet love the heretic. True zeal will long to break the idol, but deeply pity the idolater. True zeal will abhor every kind of wickedness, but labor to do good even to the vilest of transgressors. True zeal will warn as St. Paul warned the Galatians, and yet feel tenderly as a nurse, or a mother over erring children. It will expose false teachers,

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as Jesus did the Scribes and Pharisees, and yet weep tenderly as Jesus did over Jerusalem, when He came near to it for the last time. True zeal will be decided as a surgeon dealing with a diseased limb; but true zeal will be gentle as one that is dressing the wounds of a brother. True zeal will speak truth boldly, like Athanasius, against the world, and not care who is offended; but true zeal will endeavor in all its speaking, to speak the truth in love.

5. Furthermore, if zeal be true, *it will be joined to a deep humility.* A truly zealous man will be the last to discover the greatness of his own attainments. All that he is and does will come so immensely short of his own desires, that he will be filled with a sense of his own unprofitableness, and amazed to think that God should work by him at all. Like Moses, when he came down from the mount, he will not know that his face shines. Like the righteous in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, he will not be aware of his own good works. Dr. Buchanan is one whose

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praise is in all the churches. He was one of the first to take up the cause of the perishing heathen. He literally spent himself, body and mind, in laboring to arouse sleeping Christians to see the importance of missions. Yet he says in one of his letters, "I do not know that I ever had what Christians call zeal." Whitefield was one of the most zealous preachers of the Gospel the world has ever seen. Fervent in spirit, instant in season out of season, he was a burning and a shining light, and turned thousands to God. Yet he says after preaching for thirty years, "Lord help me to begin to begin." M'Cheyne was one of the greatest blessings that God ever gave to the Church of Scotland. He was a minister insatiably desirous of the salvation of souls. Few men ever did so much good as he did, though he died at the age of twenty-nine. Yet he says in one of his letters, "None but God knows what an abyss of corruption is in my heart. It is perfectly wonderful that ever God could bless such a ministry." Ah! reader, where there is self-conceit, there is little true zeal.

Reader, I ask you particularly to remember the description of true zeal, which I have just given. Zeal according to knowledge—zeal from true motives—zeal warranted by Scriptural examples—zeal tempered with charity—zeal accompanied by deep humility—this is true genuine zeal—this is the kind of zeal which God approves. Of such zeal, you and I never need fear having too much.

I ask you to remember the description, because of the times in which you live. Beware of supposing that sincerity alone can ever make up true zeal—that earnestness, however ignorant, makes a man a really zealous Christian in the sight of God. There is a generation in these days which makes an idol of what it is pleased to call “*earnestness*” in religion. These men will allow no fault to be found with an “*earnest man*.” Whatever his theological opinions may be—if he be but an earnest man, that is enough for these people, and we are to ask no more. They tell you we have nothing to do with minute points of doctrine, and with questions of words and names, about which

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Christians are not agreed. Is the man an earnest man? If he is, we ought to be satisfied. Earnestness in their eyes covers over a multitude of sins. I warn you solemnly to beware of this specious doctrine. In the name of the Gospel, and in the name of the Bible, I enter my protest against the theory that mere earnestness can make a man a truly zealous and pious man in the sight of God.

These idolaters of earnestness would make out that God has given us no standard of truth and error, or that the true standard, the Bible, is so obscure, that no man can find out what truth is by simply going to it. They pour contempt upon the word, the written word, and therefore they must be wrong.

These idolaters of earnestness would make us condemn every witness for the truth, and every opponent of false teaching, from the time of the Lord Jesus down to this day. The Scribes and Pharisees were in earnest, and yet our Lord opposed them. And shall we dare even to hint a suspicion that they ought to have been let alone? Queen Mary, and Bon-

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ner, and Gardiner were in earnest in restoring Popery, and trying to put down Protestantism, and yet Ridley and Latimer opposed them to the death. And shall we dare to say that as both parties were in earnest, both were in the right? Devil-worshippers and idolaters at this day are in earnest, and yet our missionaries labor to expose their errors. And shall we dare to say that earnestness would take them to heaven, and that missionaries to heathen and Roman Catholics had better stay at home? Are we really going to admit that the Bible does not show what is truth? Are we really going to put a mere vague thing, called “earnestness,” in the place of Christ, and to maintain that no earnest man can be wrong? God forbid that we should give place to such doctrine! I shrink with horror from such theology. I warn you solemnly to beware of being carried away by it, for it is common and most seductive in this day. Beware of it, for it is only a new form of an old error—that old error which says, that a man “Can’t be wrong whose life is in the right.” Admire zeal.

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Seek after zeal. Encourage zeal. But see that your own zeal be true. See that the zeal, which you admire in others, be a zeal "according to knowledge"—a zeal from right motives—a zeal that can bring chapter and verse out of the Bible for its foundation. Any zeal but this is but a false fire. It is not lighted by the Holy Ghost.

III. I pass on now to the third thing I proposed to speak of. Let me show you *why it is good for a man to be zealous.*

It is certain that God never gave man a commandment which it was not man's interest as well as duty to obey. He never set a grace before his believing people which His people will not find it their highest happiness to follow after. This is true of all the graces of the Christian character. Perhaps it is pre-eminently true in the case of zeal.

*Zeal is good for a Christian's own soul.* We all know that exercise is good for the health, and that regular employment of our muscles and limbs promotes our bodily comfort, and



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increases our bodily vigor. Now that which exercise does for our bodies, zeal will do for our souls. It will help mightily to promote inward feelings of joy, peace, comfort, and happiness. None have so much enjoyment of Christ as those who are ever zealous for His glory—jealous over their own walk—tender over their own consciences—full of anxiety about the souls of others—and ever watching, working, laboring, striving, and toiling to extend the knowledge of Jesus Christ upon earth. Such men live in the full light of the sun, and therefore their hearts are always warm. Such men water others, and therefore they are watered themselves. Their hearts are like a garden daily refreshed by the dew of the Holy Ghost. They honor God, and so God honors them.

I would not be mistaken in saying this. I would not appear to speak slightly of any believer. I know that the Lord takes pleasure in all His people. There is not one from the least to the greatest—from the smallest child in the kingdom of God, to the oldest warrior in the battle against Satan—there is not one in

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whom the Lord Jesus Christ does not take great pleasure. We are all His children;—and however weak and feeble some of us may be, as a father pitieth his children, so does the Lord pity them that love and fear Him. We are all the plants of His own planting;—and though many of us are poor, weakly exotics, scarcely keeping life together in a foreign soil—yet as the gardener loves that which his hands have reared, so does the Lord Jesus love the poor sinner that trusts in Him. But while I say this, I do also believe that the Lord takes special pleasure in those who are zealous for Him—in those who give themselves body, soul, and spirit, to extend His glory in this world. To them He reveals Himself, as He does not to others. To them He shows things that other men never see. He blesses the work of their hands. He cheers them with spiritual consolations, which others only know by the hearing of the ear. They are men after His own heart, for they are men more like Himself than others. None have such joy and peace in believing—none have such sensible comfort in

their religion—none have so much of heaven upon earth—none see and feel so much of the consolations of the Gospel as those who are zealous, earnest, thorough-going, devoted Christians. For the sake of our own souls, if there were no other reason, it is good to be zealous—to be very zealous in our religion.

Reader, as zeal is good for ourselves individually, so it is also *good for the professing Church of Christ generally*. Nothing so much keeps alive true religion as a leaven of zealous Christians scattered to and fro throughout a Church. Like salt, they prevent the whole body falling into a state of corruption. None but men of this kind can revive Churches when ready to die. It is impossible to overestimate the debt that all Christians owe to zeal. The greatest mistake the rulers of a Church can make, is to drive zealous men out of its pale. By so doing they drain out the life-blood of the system, and hasten on ecclesiastical decline and death.

Zeal is in truth that grace which God seems to delight to honor. Look through the list of

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Christians who have been eminent for usefulness. Who are the men that have left the deepest and most indelible marks on the Church of their day? Who are the men that God has generally honored to build up the walls of His Zion, and turn the battle from the gate? Not so much men of learning and literary talents, as men of zeal.

Bishop Latimer was not such a deeply read scholar as Cranmer or Ridley. He could not quote fathers from memory as they did. He refused to be drawn into arguments about antiquity. He stuck to his Bible. Yet it is not too much to say that no English reformer made such a lasting impression on the nation as old Latimer did. And what was the reason? His simple zeal.

Baxter, the puritan, was not equal to some of his cotemporaries in intellectual gifts. It is no disparagement to say that he does not stand on a level with Manton or Owen. Yet few men probably exercised so wide an influence on the generation in which he lived. And what was the reason? His burning zeal.

Whitefield, and Wesley, and Berridge, and Venn, were inferior in mental attainments to Bishops Butler and Watson. But they produced effects on the people of this country which fifty Butlers and Watsons would probably never have produced. They saved the Church of England from ruin. And what was one secret of their power? Their zeal.

These men stood forward at turning-points in the history of the Church. They bore unmoved storms of opposition and persecution. They were not afraid to stand alone. They cared not though their motives were misinterpreted. They counted all things but loss for the truth's sake. They were each and all and every one eminently *men of one thing*—and that one thing was to advance the glory of God, and to maintain His truth in the world. They were all fire, and so they lighted others. They were wide awake, and so they awakened others. They were all alive, and so they quickened others. They were always working, and so they shamed others into working too. They came down upon men like Moses from the

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mount. They shone as if they had been in the presence of God. They carried to and fro with them, as they walked their course through the world, something of the atmosphere and savor of heaven itself.

There is a sense in which it may be said that zeal is contagious. Nothing is more useful to the professors of Christianity than to see a real live Christian—a thoroughly zealous man of God. They may rail at him. They may carp at him—They may pick holes in his conduct. They may look shy upon him. They may not understand him any more than men understand a new comet, when a new comet appears;—but insensibly a zealous man does them good. He opens their eyes. He makes them feel their own sleepiness. He makes their own great darkness visible. He obliges them to see their own barrenness. He compels them to think, whether they like it or not—"What are we doing? Are we not no better than mere cumberers of the ground?" It may be sadly true that "one sinner *destroyeth* much good;" but it is also a blessed truth

that one zealous Christian can *do* much good. Yes! one single zealous man in a town—one zealous man in a congregation—one zealous man in a Society—one zealous man in a family may be a great, a most extensive blessing. How many machines of usefulness such a man sets a going! How much Christian activity he often calls into being which would otherwise have slept! How many fountains he opens which would otherwise have been sealed! Verily there is a deep mine of truth in those words of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, "your zeal hath provoked very many." 2 Cor. ix. 2.

But, as zeal is good for the Church and for individuals, so zeal is *good for the world*. Where would the Missionary work be if it were not for zeal? Where would our City Missions and Ragged Schools be if it were not for zeal? Where would our District-Visiting and Pastoral Aid Societies be if it were not for zeal? Where would be our Societies for rooting out sin and ignorance, for finding out the dark places of the earth, and recovering

poor lost souls? Where would be all these glorious instruments for good if it were not for Christian zeal? Zeal called these institutions into being, and zeal keeps them at work when they have begun. Zeal gathers a few despised men and makes them the nucleus of many a powerful Society. Zeal keeps up the collections of a Society when it is formed. Zeal prevents men from becoming lazy and sleepy when the machine is large, and begins to get favor from the world. Zeal raises up men to go forth, putting their lives in their hands, like Moffatt and Williams in our own day. Zeal supplies their place when they are gathered into the garner, as Weitbrecht was not long ago.

What would become of the ignorant masses who crowd the lanes and alleys of our overgrown cities, if it were not for Christian zeal? Governments can do nothing with them: they can not make laws that will meet the evil. The vast majority of professing Christians have no eyes to see it: like the priest and Levite, they pass by on the other side. But zeal has



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eyes to see, and a heart to feel, and a head to devise, and a tongue to plead, and hands to work, and feet to travel, in order to rescue poor souls, and raise them from their low estate. Zeal does not stand poring over difficulties, but simply says, "Here are souls perishing, and something *shall* be done." Zeal does not shrink back because there are Anakims in the way: it looks over their heads, like Moses on Pisgah, and says, "The land *shall* be possessed." Zeal does not wait for company, and tarry till good works are fashionable: it goes forward like a forlorn hope, and trusts that others will follow by and by. Ah! reader, the world little knows what a debt it owes to Christian zeal. How much crime it has checked! How much sedition it has prevented! How much public discontent it has calmed! How much obedience to law and love of order it has produced! How many souls it has saved! Yes! and I believe we little know what might be done if every Christian was a zealous man! How much if ministers were more like Bickersteth, and White-

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field, and M'Cheyne! How much if laymen were more like Howard, and Wilberforce, and Thornton, and Nasmith! Oh! for the world's sake, as well as your own, resolve, labor, strive to be a zealous Christian!

Beware, I beseech you, of checking zeal. Seek it. Cultivate it. Try to blow up the fire in your own heart, and the hearts of others, but never, never check it. Beware of throwing cold water on zealous souls, whenever you meet with them. Beware of nipping in the bud this precious grace when first it shoots. If you are a parent, beware of checking it in your children;—if you are a husband, beware of checking it in your wife;—if you are a brother, beware of checking it in your sisters—and if you are a minister, beware of checking it in the members of your congregation. It is a shoot of heaven's own planting. Beware of crushing it, for Christ's sake. Zeal may make mistakes. Zeal may need directing. Zeal may want guiding, controlling, and advising. Like the elephants on ancient fields of battle, it may sometimes do injury to

its own side. But zeal does not need damping in a wretched, cold, corrupt, miserable world like this. Zeal, like John Knox pulling down the Scotch monasteries, may hurt the feelings of narrow-minded and sleepy Christians. It may offend the prejudices of those old-fashioned religionists, who hate every thing new, and (like those who wanted soldiers and sailors to go on wearing pigtails), abhor all change. But zeal in the end will be justified by its results. Zeal like John Knox, in the long run of life, will do infinitely more good than harm. Oh! reader, there is little danger of their ever being too much zeal for the glory of God. God forgive those who think there is! You know little of human nature. You forget that sickness is far more contagious than health, and that it is much easier to catch a cold than impart a glow. Depend upon it, the Church seldom needs a bridle, but often needs a spur. It seldom needs to be checked, it often needs to be urged on.

And now in conclusion let me try to apply this subject to the conscience of every person

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who reads this tract. It is a warning subject—an arousing subject—an encouraging subject—according to the state of our several hearts. I wish by God's help to give every reader his portion.

1. First of all let me offer a warning to all who make no decided profession of religion. There are thousands and tens of thousands, I fear, in this condition. Reader, if you are one, the subject before you is full of solemn warning. Oh! that the Lord in mercy may incline your heart to receive it!

I ask you then, in all affection, Where is your zeal in religion? With the Bible before me, I may well be bold in asking. But with your life before me, I may well tremble as to the answer. I ask again, Where is your zeal for the glory of God? Where is your zeal for extending Christ's Gospel through an evil world? Zeal, which was the characteristic of the Lord Jesus—zeal which is the characteristic of the angels—zeal, which shines forth in all the brightest Christians—where is your zeal, unconverted reader—where is your zeal

indeed? You know well it is nowhere at all. You know well you see no beauty in it. You know well it is scorned and cast out as an evil by you and your companions. You know well it has no place, no portion, no standing ground, in the religion of your soul. It is not that you know not what it is to be zealous. You have zeal, but it is all misapplied. It is all earthly. It is all above the things of time. It is not zeal for the glory of God. It is not zeal for the salvation of souls. Yes! many a man has zeal for the newspaper, but not for the Bible—zeal for the daily reading of the “Times,” but no zeal for the daily reading of God’s blessed Word. Many a man has zeal for the account-book and the business-book, but no zeal about the book of life, and the last great account—zeal about Australian and Californian gold, but no zeal about the unsearchable riches of Christ. Many a man has zeal about his earthly concerns—his family, his pleasures, his daily pursuits, but no zeal about God, and heaven, and eternity.

Reader, if this is your case, awake, I do be-

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seech you, to see your gross *folly*. You can not live forever. You are not ready to die. You are utterly unfit for the company of saints and angels. Awake! be zealous and repent. Awake to see the *harm* you are doing. You are putting arguments in the hands of infidels by your shameful coldness. You are pulling down as fast as ministers build. You are helping the devil. Awake! be zealous, and repent. Awake to see your childish *inconsistency*. What can be more worthy of zeal than eternal things—than the glory of God—than the salvation of souls? Surely if it is good to labor for rewards that are temporal, it is a thousand times better to labor for those that are eternal. Awake! be zealous and repent. Go and read that long-neglected Bible. Take up that blessed Book which you have, and perhaps never use. Read that New Testament through. Do you find nothing there to make you zealous, to make you earnest about your soul? Go and look at the cross of Christ. Go and see how the Son of God there shed His precious blood for you—how he suffered and

groaned, and died for you—how He poured out His soul as an offering for sin, in order that you, sinful brother or sister, might not perish, but have eternal life. Go and look at the cross of Christ, and never rest till you feel some zeal for your own soul—some zeal for the glory of God—some zeal for extension of the Gospel throughout the world.

2. Let me in the next place say something to arouse those who make a profession of being decided Christians, and are yet lukewarm in their practice. There are only too many, I regret to say, in this state of soul. Reader, if you are one, there is much in this subject which ought to lead you to searchings of heart.

Let me speak to your conscience. To you also I desire to put the question in all brotherly affection, where is your zeal? Where is your zeal for the glory of God, and for extending the Gospel throughout the world? You know well it is very low. You know well that your zeal is a little feeble glimmering spark, that just lives, and no more;—it is like a thing ready to die. Surely, there is a fault some-

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where, if this is the case. This state of things ought not to be. You, the child of God—you, redeemed at so glorious a price—you, ransomed with such precious blood—you, who are an heir of glory such as no tongue ever yet told, or eye saw;—surely you ought to be a man of another kind. Surely your zeal ought not to be so small.

I deeply feel that this is a painful subject to touch upon. I do it with reluctance, and with a constant remembrance of my own unprofitableness. Nevertheless, truth ought to be spoken. The plain truth is that many believers in the present day seem so dreadfully afraid of doing harm that they hardly ever dare to do good. There are many who are fruitful in objections, but barren in actions;—rich in wet blankets, but poor in any thing like Christian fire. They are like the Dutch deputies who would never allow Marlborough to venture any thing, and by their excessive caution prevented many a victory being won. Truly, in looking round the Church of Christ, a man might sometimes think that God's kingdom



had come, and God's will was being done upon earth, so small is the zeal that some believers show. It is vain to deny it. I need not go far for evidence. I point to Societies for doing good to the heathen, the colonies and the dark places of our own land, languishing and standing still for want of active support. I ask, *is this zeal?* I point to thousands of miserable guinea subscriptions which are never missed by the givers, and yet make up the sum of their Christian liberality. I ask, *is this zeal?* I point to false doctrine allowed to grow up in parish es and families without an effort being made to check it, while so-called believers look on, and content themselves with wishing it was not so. I ask, *is this zeal?* Would the apostles have been satisfied with such a state of things? We know they would not.

Reader, if your conscience pleads guilty to any participation in the short-comings I have spoken of, I call upon you, in the name of the Lord, to awake, be zealous, and repent. Let not zeal be confined to Lincoln's Inn, the Temple, and Westminster;—to banks, and shops,

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and counting-houses. Let us see the same zeal in the Church of Christ. Let not zeal be abundant to get gold from Australia, and rescue Franklin from thick-ribbed ice, but defective to send the Gospel to the heathen, or to pluck Roman Catholics like brands from the fire, or to enlighten the dark places of the colonies of this great land. Never were there such doors of usefulness opened—never were there so many opportunities for doing good. I loathe that squeamishness which refuses to help religious works if there is a blemish about the instrument by which the work is carried on. At this rate we might never do any thing at all. Resist the feeling, reader, if you are tempted by it. It is one of Satan's devices. It is better to work with feeble instruments than not to work at all. At all events, try to do something for God and Christ—something against ignorance and sin. Give, collect, teach, exhort, visit, pray, according as God enables you. Only make up your mind that all can do something, and resolve that by you, at any rate, something shall be done. If you have

only one talent, do not bury it in the ground. Try to live so as to be missed. There is far more to be done in twelve hours than most of us have ever yet done on any day in our lives.

Think of the *precious souls* which are perishing while you are sleeping. Be taken up with your inward conflicts if you will. Go on anatomizing your own feelings, and poring over your own corruptions, if you are so determined. But remember all this time souls are going to hell, and you might do something to save them by working, by giving, by writing, by begging, and by prayer. Oh! awake, be zealous, and repent.

Think of the *shortness of time*. You will soon be gone. You will have no opportunity for works of mercy in another world. In heaven there will be no ignorant people to instruct, and no unconverted to reclaim. Whatever you do must be done now. Oh! when are you going to begin? Awake! be zealous, and repent.

Think of *the devil*, and his zeal to do harm. It was a solemn saying of old Bernard when

he said that "Satan would rise up in judgment against some people at the last day, because he had shown more zeal to ruin souls than they had to save them." Awake! be zealous, and repent.

Think of *your Saviour*, and all his zeal for you. Think of Him in Gethsemane and on Calvary, shedding His blood for sinners. Think of His life and death—His sufferings and His doings. This He has done for you. What are you doing for Him? Oh! resolve that for the time to come you will spend and be spent for Christ. Awake! be zealous, and repent.

3. Last of all let me encourage all readers of this tract who are truly zealous Christians.

I have but one request to make, and that is *that you will persevere*. I do beseech you to hold fast your zeal, and never let it go. I do beseech you never to go back from your first works, never to leave your first love, never to let it be said of you that your first things were better than your last. Beware of cooling

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down. You have only to be lazy, and to sit still, and you will soon lose all your warmth. You will soon become another man from what you are now. Oh! reader, do not think this a needless exhortation.

It may be very true that wise young believers are very rare. But it is no less true that zealous old believers are very rare also. Never allow yourself to think that you can do too much—that you can spend and be spent too much for Christ's cause. For one man that does too much I will show you a thousand who do not do enough. Rather think that the night cometh, when no man can work—and give, collect, teach, visit, work, pray, as if you were doing it for the last time. Lay to heart the words of that noble-minded Jansenist, who said when told that he ought to rest a little, "What should we rest for? have we not all eternity to rest in?"

Fear not the reproach of men. Faint not because you are sometimes abused. Heed it not if you are sometimes called bigot, enthusiast, fanatic, madman, and fool. There is

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nothing disgraceful in these titles. They have often been given to the best and wisest of men. If you are only to be zealous when you are praised for it—if the wheels of your zeal must be oiled by the world's commendation, your zeal will be but short-lived. Care not for the praise or frown of man. There is but one thing worth caring for, and that is the praise of God. There is but one question worth asking about our actions, "How will they look in the day of judgment?"

Reader, I lay these thoughts before you, and I ask you seriously to consider them.

If you are not yet a zealous man, I pray that God may make you one. If you are, I pray that your zeal may increase more and more to your life's end.

I remain your affectionate Friend,

J. C. RYLE.

VI.

“ I have Somewhat to Say unto  
Thee.”





## VI

“ I have Somewhat to Say unto Thee.”

LUKE VII. 40.

READER,

I do not know who you are. I know not whether you are old or young, or rich or poor, or learned or unlearned. I only know that you are a child of Adam, and have a soul to be lost or saved. And therefore I say, “ *Hear me! I have somewhat to say unto thee!*”

Reader, I have four things to say, and they shall soon be said. The Lord make them words in season to your soul.

I. Firstly, I have a word of WISHES AND DESIRES for every man and woman into whose hands this tract may fall.

I tell you, it is my heart's desire and prayer to God for you, that you may be saved. I

want you to be convinced of your sinfulness in the sight of God, to feel your need of a Saviour, to know Christ by faith, and to have eternal life in Him.

I wish you to be one who knows his own lost condition by nature—his own corruption, guilt, and danger of eternal ruin—his need of a righteousness far better than his own, wherein to appear before God at the day of judgment. I wish you to be one who actually applies to Christ for peace, and casts the burden of his soul upon Him—who believes on Him for forgiveness—who trusts Him for deliverance from all transgression, and forsaking all other hopes and confidence, draws from Him all his comfort and strength. I should like you to be one who lives by faith, stands by faith, walks by faith—who receives with the heart that grand truth, "He that believeth on Jesus is not condemned," and rests securely upon it.

This faith is the only principle that produces real inward holiness. This is the faith that sanctifies a man—that purifies the heart—that overcomes the world—that works by love—

that brings forth fruit. He that hath this faith is born of God and an heir of glory. He that hath it not, is not of God, knows little of true vital Christianity now, and will be lost forever hereafter.

Reader, my best desire is that you may be a new creature in Christ Jesus—led by the Spirit of God—conformed to your Master's likeness, and not unto the world—loving much, because much forgiven—having communion with the Father and the Son—one with Christ, and Christ in you.

Then I should feel that you were *safe*;—safe, though the Lord should come in glory, and heaven and earth be dissolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat—safe, because ready for every condition. Judge for yourself, can I feel that for all who read this tract?

Then I should feel that you were truly *happy*;—happy, because the springs of your happiness would be in heaven, and never dry;—happy, because your peace would be that blessed peace which the world can neither give

nor take away. Judge for yourself, can I feel that for all who read this tract?

Reader, I make no secret of my wishes, whatever you may think of them. God is my witness, these are my wishes, these are my desires for every body.

II. Secondly, I have a word of **SORROWFUL WARNING** for some into whose hands this tract will fall.

Some of you know in your own hearts and consciences—though I could say it weeping—you know well, that you are not walking with God.

You, to whom I now speak, know well that God's ways are not your ways—that although you profess and call yourselves Christians, your hearts are not right in His sight. You have no heartfelt hatred for sin. You have no heartfelt love for God's commandments. You have no delight in God's word. You have no pleasure in the company of his people. His day is a weariness to you. His service is a burthen. His ordinances are not precious to

your soul. Your first and best thoughts are given to the life that now is—you spend but the wreck and remnant of them on the life to come. Your treasure is on earth and not in heaven. Your affections are set on things below, and not on things above. Your friendship is with the world, and not with God.

Oh! reader, what has the Lord God done to you that you should treat Him in this fashion? What can the world do for you, that you should love it better than Christ? Would the world die for you?—No! but Jesus did. Can the world put away your sins?—No! Jesus alone can. Does the world give true peace in this life?—No! but Jesus does. Will the world give comfort in death?—No! but Jesus will. Can the world help you in the day of judgment?—No! no! none but Christ!

Reader, what will you do when God riseth up, except you alter?—when He visiteth, what will you answer Him, except you change?

Do you not know, that whatsoever a man soweth he shall also reap? He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption:—

He only that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life eternal. The world you think so much of now passeth away. He only that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

But God, our Saviour, still loves you. God is not willing that any one should perish. He sends you by my mouth a message of peace this day. Turn from the broad way and come unto Christ while there is yet time. Turn before the fountain is sealed, now open for sin and uncleanness;—before the Father's house is closed forever and not one more allowed to enter;—before the Spirit and the Bride cease to invite. Be wise, repent, return, and come.

Reader, you can not prevent my grieving over you, although you may be at ease yourself. God is my witness, this day I have given you a warning.

III. Thirdly, I have a word of QUICKENING AND STIRRING-UP for all true believers, into whose hands this tract may fall.

Reader, I trust I may say of you, you love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Know

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then that I want you to be a bright and shining light to those around you. I want you to be such a plain epistle of Christ, that all may read something of God on the face of your conversation. I want you so to live that all may see that you are one of the people of Jesus, and thus to glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Alas! I say it with shame, we many of us bring little glory to the Lord who bought us; we are far from walking worthy of our vocation. How weak is our faith! How fleeting our sorrow for sin! How faint our self-denial! How soon spent our patience! How thin and threadbare our humility! How formal our prayers! How cold our love! We are called God's witnesses, but truly our witness is often little better than silence;—it is but an uncertain sound. We are called the light of the world, but we are—many of us—poor, glimmering sparks that can only just be seen. We are called the salt of the earth, but we scarcely do any thing to make our Saviour felt and known. We are called pilgrims and strangers,

but those who observe us might sometimes think this world was our only home. Often, too often, we prove to be one thing in name, and another in reality;—high in our professions, but low in our practice;—giants in our resolutions, but infants in our actions;—angels and spiritual in our talking, heathen, or little better, in our doing;—goodly, like Naptali, in our words—unstable like Reuben in our works.

Oh! believing readers, these things ought not so to be. We must not be content with a low measure of holiness. We must not rest satisfied with a little sanctification. We must not think it is enough, because we have attained a small degree of grace, and are just one step better than the world. No! indeed, we must go forward from strength to strength. We must shine more and more unto the perfect day. We must strive to bear much fruit.

Christ did not give Himself for us that we should be a sleeping generation—trees that grow not—always standing still. He would have us be a peculiar people zealous of good



works—valiant for the truth—fervent in spirit—living not unto ourselves, but unto Him. Freely saved, we should freely and willingly labor. Freely forgiven, we should freely and cheerfully work. Freely redeemed from more than Egyptian bondage, we should count it a pleasure and a privilege to serve the Lord. Our lives should be books of evidences. Our acts should tell out whose we are. "Ye are my friends," saith Jesus, "if ye do whatsoever I command you."

Brother or sister, what do you in the world? Where is the proof of your growth in grace? Are you awake, or are you asleep? Are there no tempers you might keep under more strictly? Is there no sort of besetting sin you are shamefully sparing? Is there no time you might employ more usefully? Is there no kind of selfishness you are secretly indulging? Is there no good you have the means of doing, and leave undone? Are there no daily habits you might alter for the better? Are there no spots on your spiritual garments which you never seek to have washed out? Are there

no friends and relations you are letting alone in their sins? Oh! that you may deal more honestly with yourselves than you have done hitherto! The Lord is at hand.

Brother or sister, look within. Take heed lest a deceitful heart, and an ensnaring world, and a busy devil, turn you out of the way. Study a tender conscience. Beware of indolence under the cloak of false humility. Make not the old Adam, and the devil, an excuse for little sins. Let the least things of your daily life be done well;—like the shekel of the sanctuary, let them be good measure—let them be even more than full weight. Watch ye, stand fast, quit you like men. They that follow the Lord fully are those that follow Him most comfortably. Be 'zealous though the world may sleep.

Brother or sister, I give you this word of quickening, in love. I would not have you be the least in the kingdom of heaven. I would not like you to be the palest and dimmest among the stars in glory. I want you not only to be scarcely saved, and so as by fire,

but to receive a full reward. Then lay these things well to heart.

IV. Fourthly, I have words of ADVICE for every one that desires to be a real Christian.

One part of my advice is this—“*Search the Scriptures.*” They only are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. They are the truth of God. They must be fulfilled. They can not be broken. And yet they are the book which many have, and very few read.

Reader, beware lest an unread Bible be an awful witness against you at the last day. If you would have your soul saved, read the Bible. If you would not be always wavering and carried about by every wind of doctrine, read the Bible. Read it regularly. Read it all. Be a Bible-reading Christian, whatever the world may say. Make time for this, whatever others may do. Remember my advice. *If you would not lose your own soul, read the Bible.*

Another piece of advice is this—“*Pray*

*without ceasing.*" Prayer is the only way by which man can approach God. Prayer is the only messenger we can send to tell God what we want; and if we would have good things for our souls, we must ask for them. Prayer opens the treasuries of God's mercies like a key; if we ask, we shall receive. Prayer is the means that every one can use if he will; and yet for all this many people never pray.

Reader, beware lest your neglect of prayer should prove your condemnation. If Jesus is to save you, you must pray. If your sins are to be forgiven, you must pray. If the Spirit is to dwell in your heart, you must pray. If you are to have strength against sin, you must pray. If you are to dwell with God in heaven, your heart must talk with God upon earth by prayer.

Oh! be not a prayerless Christian, whatever others may think right. Begin to pray this day if you never prayed before. Remember, if you and I are to meet each other with joy at Christ's appearing, *you must pray.*

Another piece of advice is this—"Attend

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*regularly on means of grace."* Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Go to some place of worship where the Gospel is preached. Faith cometh by hearing. Those who never hear are never likely to believe the Gospel.

Reader, beware lest you are ruined forever by neglecting the means which God has appointed for your salvation. Alas! it does not need to be a murderer, or an adulterer, or a thief, or a liar, in order to be in the way to hell. You have only to sit still, to do nothing, to profane the Sabbath, to refuse to listen to instruction, and in hell you will find yourself at last. Oh! do not let this be your end. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Walk in the road where Jesus loves to walk, and who can tell but He will one day make you one of His believing people?

Reader, I commend these things to your special notice. I know they are worth thinking over.

The Lord grant, if you never thought of them before, that you may go on thinking,

thinking, thinking about them till your soul is saved.

The Lord grant, if you have thought of them, that you may think of them more and more every year you live.

The more you think of them the happier you will be.

I remain, your affectionate friend,

J. C. RYLE.









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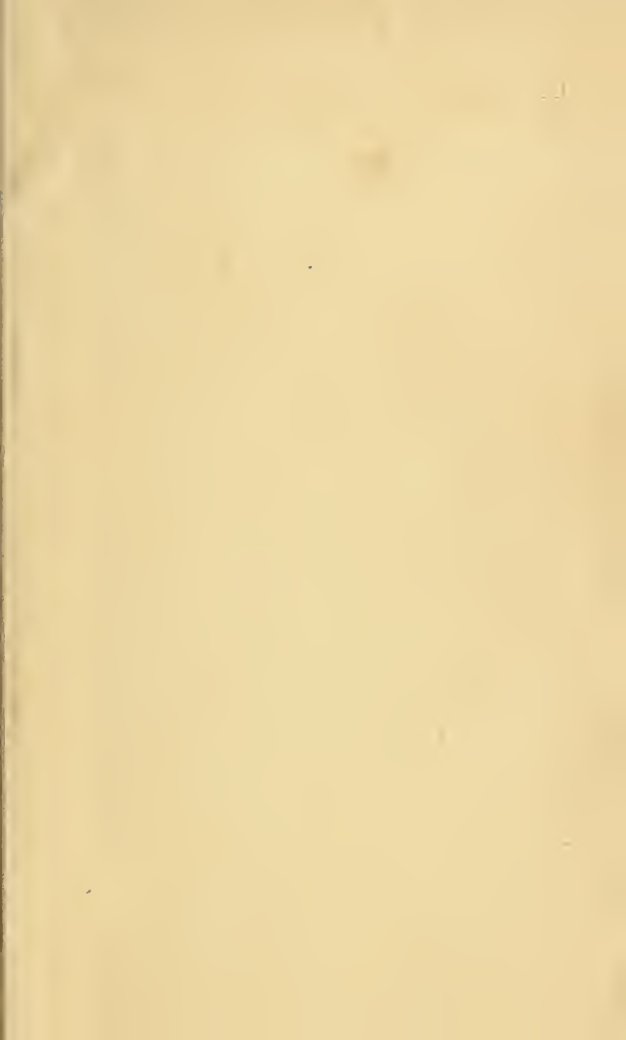


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